Peculiarity of development of non-formal education in Belarusian non-profit sector*

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Independent Belarus has already been existed on the map of Europe for more than 14 years. It is almost impossible to count and name all these new, modern, unusual, creative things that have come to our life during this period of time. Education and social activity didn't stay aside this process as well. Thanks to basic political, economical and social changes that took place in post-Soviet countries, both education and social activity met each other and started active interaction within the frames of non-formal education, which is realized thanks to the efforts of a number of Belarusian non-governmental organizations (NGO).

It is the first time in our society when we have some conditions for real using education as a tool of democratic development. It has happened so that Belarusian non-profit sector starting its development from almost "zero point" has become the most active and flexible subject in this process. Public associations were not afraid of to learn something new, to "import" some interesting ideas, to re-interpret something they new before, to refuse from some old concepts and choose more perspective and modern ones. And as a result of that – everybody has got benefits from that.

In this article author tries to make a short review of development of non-formal education in particular in NGO sector and analyze modern situation in this sphere.

Despite of the fact of existing during Soviet Union times both developed, extended and formalized system of educational and enlightening work with population (out of the frames of secondary and higher education), the system of non-formal education nowadays is still at the stage of constructing.

Together with reaching national independence by our country in the beginning of 90-s of the last century non-formal education in Belarus has got its new reference point. There was no any common plan of development of this educational sphere so it has started its chaotic, spontaneous and even sometimes painful process of growing. Various representatives of state, business and public sector took part in this development. That is why the ways of development of such a wide sphere as non-formal education varied depending on aims and functions of this or that sector: from addition to formal educational system, liquidation of its gap to satisfying new requirements aimed at effective competition on labor market etc.

This article is not aimed at analysis of non-formal education in Belarus at large. First of all it is oriented on particular segment of non-formal education that is realized within the frames and thanks to efforts of non-governmental organizations (NGO) during the last 10–15 years.

Before starting the dialogue about non-formal education it is necessary to clarify the definition, otherwise we take the risk to be misunderstood. First of all we have to admit that definition "non-formal education" is extremely capacious but in the same time it hasn't still got its clear single meaning. Thus there is a number of different versions of this definition.

Non-formal education is very often defined as creation of conditions and opportunities for getting by people appropriate educational experience aimed at raising the level of their social, professional and civic competence.

* Вялічка У. Нефармальная адукацыя дарослых у беларускім трэцім сектары: асаблівасці развіцця // "Адукатар", №1, 2004 – С. 2–6.

According to another point of view non-formal adult education is "educational system that helps to liberalize people and strengthen their abilities and positions on market and modern economy and provide possibilities of governing and changing situation in the society".[1]

According to this understanding there are the following functions of non-formal education defined:

- "**Social function** — providing equal social opportunities for people for their development.
- **Economical function** — permanent (regular) raising professional and individual competence of a person, raising quality of his/her activity and economical mobility, strengthening his/her positions on labor market.
- **Cultural function** — raising understanding and knowledge about the world and society, forming esthetic and moral values.
- **Political function** — assisting to development of pluralism of ideas and participating of people in decision-making processes, assistance in establishing and development democratic institutes of power, development of political culture".[2]

It is also necessary to admit that the word "non-formal" used for defining this educational sphere pays attention to some opposition of this kind of education to traditional one (secondary, higher and professional education) implemented in the frames of formal educational system. In the same time non-formal education is not so much as an alternative but more like addition and development of existing educational systems.

It is also possible to meet in the literature such a definition as "civic education". This definition is very often used among Belarusian NGO. In its wide sense (in a narrow sense civic education is explained as aimed at forming knowledge about political system, specter of political parties, participation of citizens in political decision-making etc.) civic education is defined as rather close to non-formal education. In particular civic education is very often defined as "preparing citizens for realization of their rights and responsibilities with the aim to support and strengthen self-governing as a basis of citizens' participation in the life of community, nation or state. The main aim of civic education in this case is educating citizens (independently of their age) to values and norms of life in democracy, in other words civic consciousness as we call that".[3]

According to this aim there are three main objectives of civic education defined:

- Gaining and adjusting **knowledge** about society and its elements, those are important for achieving adequate level of social and civic competence.
- Acquiring **skills** of self-realization as an independent and autonomous social subject as well as skills of organizing optimal type of social communication.
- Individual forming **values and attitudes** that principally define a model of democratic social behavior.[4]

It is necessary to mention that such understanding of objectives of civic education is a great extent correlates with vision of role of non-formal education worked out and suggested by UNESCO. It suggests four main objectives: to educate in order to know, to act, to exist and to co-exist.[5] It confirms once again synonymous using described above definitions both in literature and in various professional communities.

In the same time it is impossible to tell about absolute equivalent sense of all these terms as they characterize the phenomena from different perspectives. Definition "civic education" mostly appeals to educational aims - educating citizens, forming active life position. Definition "non-formal education" is first of all oriented on paying attention to way of organizing the process of education that is rather different from traditional (formal) education.

It is also possible to meet in some books other definitions which are more or less accordant to described phenomena of non-formal education (for instance lifelong education, adult education, folk education etc.). Accepting using these definitions in synonymous sense we nevertheless intend to use in this article definition "non-formal education" as it is the most adequate to the analyzed phenomena.

What is seen as expected result of non-formal education realized by non-profit organizations? Non-formal education is so many-sided that it can hardly have any fixed frames or limits. A person gets the opportunity to develop himself/herself through learning with others some economical issues or foreign language, to realize his/her personality through handcrafting or analysis of situation with human rights.

Whatever participants do during their education, independently of some particular content of education, there is an idea, dream uniting the majority of NGO realizing the process of non-formal education in Belarus. It is increasing number of people sharing democratic values and having appropriate skills and attitudes that are necessary for life in modern society. Some researches of social processes define a number of key skills important for forming democratic model of behavior:

[1] H. Veremeichik, T. Poshevalova. Adult Education: German Experience For Belarus, Minsk, 1999 (in Russian) — p. 5.
[2] H. Veremeichik, T. Poshevalova. Adult Education: German Experience For Belarus, Minsk, 1999 (in Russian) — p. 5.
[3] I. Bugrova. Educating a Citizen // Counterpart Alliance For Partnership Bulletin "Novy Resurs", #2 (17), February 2003 (in Russian) — p. 5. [WWW document]. URL http://cap.iatp.by
[4] Civic Education: Foreign Experience, Problems Of Development / Responsible Editors A. Mikhailov, V. Dunaev. — Minsk, Propilei, 1999 (in Russian) — p. 37.
[5] Y. Zinchenko. Some Thoughts About How We Are Lucky With Non-Formal Education // "Sodejstvie" youth magazine, #5, 2003 (in Russian) — p. 5.

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- Skills of life in dialogue environment, understanding of sense and role of dialogue in the society.
- Development of critical thinking skills.
- Decision-making skills and skills of taking and holding responsibilities and foreseeing possible outcomes of taken decisions.
- Skills of problem-solving and conflict-solving, skills of making a choice.
- Skills of organizing civic initiatives and formulating positions and requirements.
- Skills of creating co-operative and solidarity environment (situations).
- Skills of projecting and foreseeing future events and changes etc.[6]

This list may and must be continued. In the same time the success in achieving the goal is directly dependant not only on dissemination of knowledge and information about social processes but also on how the process of accepting and adjusting this knowledge is organized. In other words it is not enough only to have all information about democracy as a system of building the society. It is much more important to reach democratic model of behavior of people in their real everyday life. So the way of organizing educational process in the system of non-formal education is able to provide such a result.

Some researches define five basic pedagogical processes – learning, education, training, upbringing and enlightening. Results and outcomes of each of these basic processes are principally different. In that way if the result of learning process is accepted knowledge, then the result of education process is the way of thinking, reflection and understanding etc.[7] If to have a person with democratic model of behavior as a result of non-formal education then it worth paying the main attention to organizing the education process. In this case all other processes are not less important but have other specific functions.

For implementing any of basic pedagogical processes it is used some particular toolbox of educational methods. That is why when we speak about preparing a person to using democratic norms and values in everyday life, about active life position; it means that educational means and methods should be selected in accordance to the aims. In other words it is more effective "to develop" an active citizen through such a type of organizing educational process where he/she takes an active and key role in this process.

So what have helped non-formal education in Belarus to reach some progress during rather short period of time? This question is hardly to be answered in one sentence. Of course there were a number of factors. First of all there were new opportunities to try something new in other educational environment, higher interest of population to the questions of social development, establishing and evolution of NGO sector, craving for changes…

Keeping in mind peculiarities of social and political life of Belarus in the first half of 90-s it is possible to say that NGO sector have become a great arena of personal self-realization, providing some ideas and values in the society for a large number of active, creative people who are not indifferent to destiny and future of our country. So there is not a surprise that organizations, which were established at that time (Leu Sapieha Foundation for Supporting Democratic Reforms, National Youth Organization "Next Stop – New Life", National Council of Youth and Children Organizations "RADA", Public Association "United Way" and many others) play active and significant role in social processes initiated by Belarusian NGO up to now.

From our point of view non-formal education has become one of the priorities for Belarusian NGO sector from year 1994. Exactly at that time non-formal education started to be recognized as a mean of strengthening democratic principles and values in the society as well as a tool for wide dissemination of knowledge about democracy.

Keeping in mind a lack of previous experience of such activity it was rather evident that most of activities held in the very beginning by non-profit organizations were based on some emotional enthusiasm and provided first of all informational and enlightening functions. Efforts of number of NGO were concentrated around establishing some structures of non-formal education which would be able to fill in existing niche and satisfy require on additional (mostly social) knowledge and skills. This task was tried to be solved by different projects of Public Association "United Way" (NGO trainers club), Sapieha Foundation (group of trainers), Center of Social Innovations (courses for adults), Public Association "Foundation «Open Society»" (Philomath movement), cooperative project of several NGO "Folk University", "Belarusian Calehium" etc.

The results of this work have come rather soon. Within rather short period of time there was trained rather significant number of specialists, who were able to organize and hold educational process in different NGO projects in the sphere of non-formal education.

From our point of view there was also a great importance of foreign experience that was accumulated by other countries for several tens of years and later came and was spread in Belarus very quickly. Having strong deficit of financial and intellectual resources Belarusian NGO have taken leading position in establishing international contacts and development of cooperation with their partners abroad. For the last

[6] I. Bugrova. Educating a Citizen // Counterpart Alliance For Partnership Bulletin "Novy Resurs", #2 (17), February 2003 (in Russian) – p. 6. [WWW document]. URL http://cap.iatp.by

[7] S. Krupnik. Stop-Signal For Civic Education // The Assembly of Belarusian Pro-Democratic NGO Bulletin, February-march 2003 (in Russian) – p. 6.

10 years non-profit organizations have implemented great number of partnership projects, including project in the sphere of non-formal education. There was organized a huge number of seminars, trainings, roundtables, conferences etc. A large amount of foreign specialists have visited Belarus and made great input into development of non-formal education in our country. Rather significant part of our activists and members of NGO took part in various educational programs, internships, courses, study tours organized for them abroad. The highest activeness in development of partnership with our NGO belongs to European specialists — first of all from Poland, Germany, Great Britain, Sweden and Netherlands as well as some organizations and specialists from USA.

That is why it is not surprising that foreign experience have filled the gaps of our system of non-formal education. It is not a secret that most of our methodic and technical components of educational process in this sphere are "imported" from the experience of different countries where non-formal education has much deeper history and traditions.

On the other side quick and spontaneous meeting with foreign experience very often was not used in the most appropriate way. Sometimes senseless copying of something seen or heard took place without any tries to adopt and adjust foreign experience to our modern Belarusian situation. From time to time foreign specialists took the function of "missioners" that teach "not educated" Belarusians the basics of "right" way life. All these facts to some extent influenced the effectiveness of using foreign experience, leaded to losing some sense of it, formed resistance to get deeper in further analysis of this experience.

Thus it is possible to say that potential of work with foreign experience in the field of non-formal education was realized only partly. This lets us look at it as at one of the main sources for development in the nearest future as well.

One of the main prerequisites for development of Belarusian non-formal education at present time is appearance of a new type of request for educational results. Socio-economic conditions, which changed significantly in the 90s of the 20th century, have adjusted the people's needs for the content and quality of education. This brought about a need for a strongly articulated practice-oriented approach. In other words, before starting education, its participants have or, at least, try to formulate a certain vision of why they need this type of education, where and how they can possibly implement it in their activities. In spite of the fact that this approach is invariably repeated in traditional education, its practical realization was subject to well-grounded doubts. Thus, the non-formal education, being more flexible and mobile than formal educational system, at a certain moment started to pay its attention to the newly appeared educational request of people, that is, getting and implementation of practical social, civic and communicative abilities and skills in social and professional activities.

Unfortunately, in the same time modern non-formal education within Belarusian NGO sector has a limited capacity of satisfying educational needs of wide range of its target groups. NGOs working in this field are still not able to provide broad groups of population with a respective quantity and quality of educational services due to a number of reasons. Such a situation limits participation in various seminars, trainings, programs, etc. to a small quantity of people. Therefore, we may not say about serious influence of non-formal education upon the Belarusian society. Thus, creation of conditions for broad participation in non-formal education should become one of the priorities for educational and instructive NGOs in the near future.

The process of development of non-formal education was and is all the time provided with training own pedagogical specialists (trainers, experts, lecturers etc.) who are better than other specialists able to organize effective educational process in this sphere. This tendency also may be recognized as a basic precondition for development of non-formal education in Belarus.

In this context it is necessary to admit time period between 1996 and 1999 when training trainers for non-formal education was really massive and comprehensive. It was explained on one hand by high demand for such specialists, on the other hand — by position of a number of donors that found training trainers one of the priorities for their activity.

Of course, a lot of trainers from non-profit organizations who were trained and educated and got a great experience at that period of time are active in non-formal education up to now. In the same time such "conveyor production" have shown a number of serious problems which haven't solved till today and provoked some negative outcomes. For instance, as a result of such approach, professional standards of trainer's work were not formulated and a number of trainers educated at that time left non-formal education and NGO sector as such. The word "trainer" started to be used in some ironic sense.

One of the key problems, connected with preparing specialists for non-formal education is the absence of a system of upgrading qualification of such specialists. Very soon the time came when it was already not enough just "to name" yourself a trainer and "somehow" organize some study. There was actual question about quality of educational services provided for people. And this quality directly depends on qualification of educator (trainer, lecturer etc.) providing these services. It is surely possible to admit that among NGO trainers and educators there is a wide circle of people who have gone through qualitative first stage training but now have strong need in upgrading their qualification and achieving new professional level to be able to solve actual educational tasks.

Together with what was said above it is also necessary to admit a number of problems from solving which very much dependant the future of non-formal education development in Belarus:

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- **Inadequate acknowledgement of value of educational activities of NGO by the state, lack of their integration into the educational sphere of Belarus**. One might say that a significant quantity of organizations of non-formal education and their offices work with permission of the state, rather than due to the interest of the state in such activities. In this regards the situation in Belarus differs from the situation with our neighbors, Ukraine and Russia, where state bodies at various levels openly declare their interest in development of non-formal education, and in participation of the broadest range of people in various educational activities.
- **Lack of developed cooperation among educational and instructive NGOs and initiatives**. Due to the hardships connected with existence of NGOs they have focused their efforts on survival. Such a position does not permit them to view and utilize to their ends the opportunities, which are offered by developing active cooperation with other NGO educational organizations in particular and in Belarus on the whole. NGOs have not quite learned to combine their resources, to invite colleagues to take part in their projects, to lobby and protect their common interests, etc.
- **Inadequate institutionalization of educational civic organizations and their services, lack of professional management in this field**. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons, Belarusian NGO sector does not have an example of a certain organization, which provides with educational services via development of the very educational establishment. Most of the educational activities of civic organizations remind of "the flying Dutch": it is impossible to anticipate where, when and for whom education will be held in a week or in a month. NGOs themselves decide who should be targeted by their activities and means of management of such activities. Thus, the potential participants have the only choice to agree to the worked-out strategy with virtually no chance to influence or alter it. Such approach multiplied by regularly changeable mode of activities does not allow common citizens to enter non-formal education. It does not allow them to choose the most suitable time and place for it. Besides, the NGO sector at present does not have a sufficient quantity of management professionals able to manage effectively not educational activities but an educational institution.

It is also necessary to mention some latest tendencies presenting in relations between Belarusian NGOs of non-formal education and state policy for the last 2 years:

The importance of supporting and development non-formal education in conditions of modern Belarusian socio-political and economical situation is even getting higher. It is possible to admit some tendencies of monopolizing the sphere of adult and non-formal education by state educational institutions, unequally competing with independent organizations that are rather active on this field and high pressure on NGO sector at large. In these circumstances educational NGOs as a rule have problems with wide entrance to their target groups and have to limit specter of their programs and services because of financial and technical reasons.

Majority of organizations face numerous difficulties at various aspects of their activities. First of all these difficulties are connected with organizational (financing, sustainability, promotion of programs, search for relevant forms of education) and professional (level of training, accompaniment of education, lack of standards in civic education sphere etc.) issues. Secondly, the state provides too much regulation and control of activities and development of educational NGOs. Belarus does not have a corresponding legislation; there is lack of non-formal education tradition. Thirdly, the system of training and retraining of highly qualified trainers, multiplicators and other educators is insufficiently developed. The system of management training for non-formal education is practically missing.

Such activities are held on irregular basis within the framework of international projects and only under the condition of participation of a large number of foreign specialists. It makes such programs much more expensive. On the other hand, this situation does not promote establishment of a permanently acting self-financing system. Such initiatives usually die away with stopping external assistance.

Other than that, some organizations are afraid of advertising their courses despite of the fact that education is their main activity. They hold courses only with the help of financial resources of sponsors and on a volunteer basis. However, there is virtually no opportunity of a broad advertising campaign.

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Non-formal education in Belarus already has significant positive results despite of the fact that its modern history is rather short. NGO sector has already reached some satisfying level of coordination and unification in the sphere of non-formal education that may be seen through activity of Belarusian network "Association for Civic Education" uniting today 14 organizations having rather reach experience of work in this sphere. These organizations have their own programs, specialists, methods, target groups, literature and coordinate their activities.

In the same time the level of educational services in the field of non-formal education and circle of people involved into it require further increasing development as well as mentioned problems require their quick solving. We want to hope that understanding by Belarusian non-formal education organizations and their partners perspectives of development in this sphere will let all of us to achieve new and better situation, liquidate all disadvantages and be much more effective on the way to achieving over-all aim — stimulating building democratic society in Belarus.

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Some aspects of the development strategy in civic education for the activity of the third sector in Belarus*

Victor Chernov

The point or essence, and the main aim of civic education is the training of people to a responsible life and activity under a market-democratic society. The content of civic education covers the following:

- getting a basic knowledge about a society, its politics, legal practices, economic environment, and information directly related with everyday issues;
- mastering democratic values and norms that facilitate the shaping of an independent civic position, i.e.,(the priority of human rights and freedoms, tolerance, compromise, and cooperation, etc.);
- skills development for competent and responsible civic participation (for example, ability to think critically, to present and protect own interests respecting other people's interests and rights, to solve together common problems, to make a well-grounded choice and to bear responsibility for it).

Unlike the usual political education the content of civic education can not be axiologically neutral to the process of its perception. This education should purposely produce an effect on a person's values. It should help people shape the qualities needed for democracy; such as aspiration to freedom and consensus, responsibility, civic spirit, patriotism, readiness to compromise, and partnership. Accordingly, civic education is a person-oriented education, aimed at shaping a rationalistic and democratic mentality that forms a positive civic political culture.

The main result of civic education is the development of competent people striving to participate in socio-political life and being ready to be personally responsible for their own well-being and the well-being of the society that they live in.

The mission of civic education in Belarus is to facilitate the shaping of a civic society and a democratic law-based state. A specific character of the core goals a of civic education under the conditions of the Belarusian transition society are these. The facilitation of the political socialization of the growing generation, and the equally critical political re-socialization of the adult population ("reconstruction of civism") and support in the shaping of democracy-oriented elite groups of society.

These goals must be achieved within the frames of the national system of civic education, which should cover three interrelated subsystems – education for children, young people and adults including formal, non-formal and informal (self-education) education. Today the most complicated task is to reconstruct civism, to shape a sustainable democratic culture among adults, since in their education civic knowledge, attitude and skills on this topic were not tendered.

All of these actualize a necessity to include a civism component into both systems of secondary and higher education, and adult education. In continuing education, civic competencies are being developed, which include the mastering of new professional and social skills as a way to effect changes in society and the status of a person.

Belarus is still characterized by an undeveloped maturity of socio-cultural pre-conditions for the building of a civic society. A major part of the population is structured as non-associated groups, characterized by a low level of national self-consciousness and social mutual trust, orienting itself on an individual (patron-customer) form of interest articulation and the state patronage. These groups do not show a clear aspiration to have structured collective activities. The idea being that a united people can change life conditions is slowly being disseminated.

The mired attempts of civic society development in Belarus require a re-thinking of the mission, goals and potential results of civic education carried out by the third sector. The efforts of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are needed to be concentrated on broadcasting European democratic values and norms into the widest groups of the population. The educational programmes of NGOs should facilitate strengthening of Belarusian identification, patriotism and the state system, the development of civic self-consciousness and the skills of a collective self-organization. The education of agents of mass civic society, able to produce a competent and constructive influence in all fields of life and activity of Belarusian society, should be treated as a mission and the core result of a civic education [1].

* Чернов В. Некоторые аспекты стратегии развития гражданского образования в третьем секторе Беларуси // "Адукатар", №1(4), 2005 – С. 7–13.

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1. General characteristic of civic education in the third sector of Belarus

The current stage of civic education development in Belarus is characterized not only by the fact that the third sector understands its necessity, but also by the introduction of civic discipline into the system of state education. The Concept of general education reform says that civic education is one of the main objectives of a modern school and names prioritized directions for the shaping of civic competencies of a person:

- legal cultural education and citizens' upbringing in the law-based state;
- Mastering moral culture, the basis of which is formed by values common to all mankind: humanism, mercy and tolerance.
- Mastering of civic culture via engaging teenagers and young people into public life [2].

At the same time it should be admitted that mainly NGOs initiate civic knowledge dissemination and civic competencies development in Belarus. They have accumulated significant experience in the field of non-formal civic education and enlightenment. Analysis of it shows positive and negative tendencies of NGOs' educational activity.

On the one hand:

- A number of educational NGOs is growing, geography and theme covering of their activity are increasing;
- content and forms of education are becoming more diverse;
- informational and methodical aids are being developed;
- professionalism of trainers and teachers is growing.

On the other hand:

- There is no system in the activity of many NGOs, it becomes apparent in aiming at once-only projects, not at long-term educational programmes;
- Circle of customers of the third sector's services in the field of civic education is still limited and, as a rule, elite-narrowed;
- Training and re-training of multipliers' groups are not given enough attention;
- There is almost no monitoring and analysis of long-term, post-project effects.

A common result is the low efficiency of the majority of NGOs declaring civic education as the main activity. We ought to establish the fact that they do not fulfil their mission – facilitation to shaping of subjects of civic society. It produces a negative impact both on development of civic education and on building civic society.

2. Strategic development directions of civic education in the third sector

Increasing of the field of educational NGOs' reality supposes that they understand and accept mission of civic education in self-determination regime, collective communications and agreement of approaches worked-out [3]. In this respect I think that the following activity directions of educational NGOs are perspective.

2.1. Creation of a constant-acting and multi-stage system of civic education aimed at various target groups of young people and adults

The system of civic education in the third sector is a totality of interacting successive educational programmes of different complexity and directions, educational NGOs and their coordinating structures.

Creation of the system of civic education will let us unite efforts of many organizations, increase efficiency of resources usage, offer programmes of various complexity and of different directions, shape and support own personnel base, facilitate mass training of competent citizens and creation of democratic elite.

Coordination of educational projects and programmes being held by different NGOs must be aimed at enabling each representative of this or that target group to pass all levels of civic education and enlightenment (initial, basic and advanced). NGOs must be aimed at facilitating the creation of the system of civic education both on local and national levels [4].

2.1.1. Development and implementation of multi-level programmes of civic education

Creation of the system of civic education supposes that NGOs aim themselves not so much at once-only and sometimes sporadic projects, but at long-term educational programmes. Such programmes must be systematic, be of different complexity and directions within the frames of common module system of educational programmes, focusing on the final result, respond adequately to requests of target groups, be practice oriented.

2.1.2. Switch to predominantly long-term forms of civic education

The re-orientation of educational NGOs towards relatively long-term forms of education is expedient. In the Belarusian conditions the main educational events can be presented by study circles, folk universities, schools for civic education and higher specialized courses.

Study circle is relatively a long-tern form of collective self-education for various population groups, based on exchange of knowledge, experience and skills between circle's participants on commonly-developed schedule (minimal duration is 2–3 months).

Folk university (FU) is a form and programme of civic education and enlightenment for wide groups of population (basic level). The FU's schedule is mainly an extensive course of civic subjects (120 and more academic hours) with a duration from 3 months to 1 year.

Civic education school for is a form and full-time training programme for intensive education in the basics of civic knowledge (80–220 academic hours up to 2–3 weeks) for specific target groups: school and college,

journalists, students, trade unions members, young politicians, women, political parties' activists and NGOs, etc. The school's format allows study of subjects traditionally included into schedules of more advanced levels.

Higher specialized courses (schools, seminars, etc.) are advanced programmes of intensive (or extensive) training or re-training of groups of multipliers in the field of civic education (lecturers, trainers, school and college teachers, journalists, etc.) and managers in education.

The curriculum for multipliers, along with subject knowledge, must include specialized modules dedicated to teaching methods and techniques, and pedagogical methods. Training of managers supposes a development of flexible module curriculums in the field of management and marketing, taking into account the specifics of a civic education.

2.1.3. Strengthening the existing networks of educational organizations, improvement of the coordination between the structures of civic education

Priority/development should be given to common projects of NGOs, educational programmes, which are aimed at systematic and long-term activity with target groups.

This approach supposes development of allied educational programmes. It requires uniting and coordination of efforts of different educational NGOs. Development and implementation of allied (local or national) projects covering the project packages of separate educational NGOs can be one way implementing such cooperation.

The organizations should have an opportunity to produce influence on the decision-making process at all stages of development of the allied project that will allow them to participate more efficiently in joint activity and evaluate the advantages of common development in practical work. Therefore, the common project must be developed in a dialogue module. The concerned NGOs form a working group, within its frames they together develop a project concept, activity plan, allocate functions and responsibilities. Then each organization drafts its own project to be integrated into a common one. As a result a kind of cooperation of organizations interacting with each other on principals of horizontal coalition is created.

The horizontal model of implementation of the allied project supposes a single finance responsibility of each organization-participant before a donor and its double responsibility — before a donor and project council — for implementation of their project functions. The horizontal model of coalition can operate on local and national levels. On the one hand such model allows saving the autonomy of organizations and on the other hand to concentrate and use their resources in the most efficient way and to increase sustainability of the system of civic education.

2.2. Aiming at training and re-training of multipliers' groups

At current stage of development of civic education the organizations of the third sector need to concentrate attention on intensive training and re-training of multipliers' groups, especially of those categories that have basic college background and functional access to wide audience.

2.2.1. Training and re-training of multipliers, whose professional activity directly connected with civic education

First of all it regards teachers of secondary school and college teachers of socio-humanitarian subjects. They are the most massive and professionally trained multiplication group having access to the wide young audience. Teachers of socio-humanitarian subjects produce sufficient influence on socialization of new generations, who are coming into social life and who will shape a new look of Belarusian society in the future.

There are many examples when teachers having been trained at advanced training courses at schools for civic education became multipliers of civic knowledge in the third sector. They hold their own seminars and conferences, run study circles and implement other kinds of educational events aimed not just at their students, but at the audience beyond school. Such practices allow for the growth of a network of non-formal civic education at the cost of new regions and groups.

2.2.2. The elite-based recruitment of new multiplication groups, which are not professionally related with civic education

We mean such elite groups, whose representatives are often lead public opinion. They are school teachers and lecturers of non-humanitarian subjects, of ecology, social workers, journalists, entrepreneurs, deputies, officials, etc. Their civic education is not just essential element of professional competence but it is an additional factor that significantly increases influence of civic education agents on people's aims and believes.

2.3. Increasing the access channels of NGOs' educational programmes to non-associated groups of Belarusian society

The mass training of multipliers is a necessary but insufficient condition for successful implementation of projects in the field of civic education. NGOs should also have channels to transmit civic knowledge and skills to young people and adults in Belarus.

2.3.1. Implementation of programmes of civic education and enlightenment for wide groups of society (politics, economy, history, law, etc.)

It is wise to re-start or continue implementation of those common educational programmes (projects) that already time proved their sustainability and efficiency, for example, programmes of the Folk University or a cycle of seminars dedicated to legal education. Along with this such programmes aimed at the widest target groups are implemented as a rule via very limited access channels (pro-democratic NGOs, parties, trade union organizations). As a result it often turns to be that the main part of the audience is represented by activists of these structures.

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2.3.2. Integration of civic education programmes' into other kinds of educational programmes or practice-oriented projects

Education for civic competence is done not just directly but indirectly – via teaching intellectual, social and professional competencies. Therefore, public associations and other organizations whose profile is connected with humanitarian aid and meeting socio-cultural requests of rather wide non-associated categories of citizens can become the main access channel for programmes of civic education in Belarus. Both educational organizations and institutions not connected with civic education and various non-educational structures engaged in the field of social protection and rehabilitation, sport and tourism, Chernobyls'ecological, cultural, youth organizations, and women and religious associations among others belong to these category.

2.3.3. Engaging of "the equal groups" into programmes of civic education and enlightenment

So-called "the equal groups" can become the important influence channel for educational NGOs on shaping civic aims and orientations, members of such groups are tightly connected with each other and have nearly equal status. They are friends, close house's neighbors, courtyard groups, small working groups, etc. The membership in "the equal group" usually induces people to follow common aims and behavior models. Thus, such groups are powerful factor of socialization.

Engagement of "the equal groups" into a network of non-formal civic education supposes an analysis of their needs and interests, access to non-formal leaders, turning of the latest into specific influence agents of NGOs and working out mechanism to motivate groups to participate in training programmes. As a result a subject pressing for this or that group is shaped and optimal form of education is chosen, most likely it can be a study circle.

2.3.4. Rendering assistance to self-organization of non-associated groups

The priority should be given to those educational projects, whose final result can be presented in the creation and strengthening of new public associations and initiatives consisting of non-associated people. New agents of civil society will need additional information and education services facilitating their sustainable development and competent presentation of their specific interests.

2.3.5. Creation of new educational initiatives based on multiplication groups, acting in socially homogeneous or similar to them environment

Such initiatives can become the most efficient communication channel between educational NGOs and non-associated groups. For example, with a help of theaters' initiatives it is possible to implement various educational programmes for teachers and students' parents, including those, which are aimed at increasing civic consciousness and competence. Own autonomous educational projects based on recommendations given by more experienced local and international NGOs can be developed by efforts of new initiatives.

2.4. Development of training, instructional and technology support for civic education

Carrying out of the above mentioned directions in civic education development supposes creation of an adequate training and instructional base, development and launching of various study causes, techniques, preparation of training and teachers' materials and also mastering of technologies and means of distance learning.

2.4.1. Development of multi-variant training courses with relevant educational techniques on the basis of educational programmes

The most advanced NGOs should focus their efforts on development and approbation of varied training courses at all levels of civic education, taking into account specific needs of different target groups.

First of all, it is needed to develop integrated training courses basing on local and international experience, for example, such as "Civic Education", "Teaching democracy" or "Human rights". Their study helps to understand fundamental democratic values and to shape civic orientations and aims.

Secondly, in the field of civic education it is important to pay attention to the development of specialized advanced training courses and advanced training for multiplication groups representing different social groups and taking into account their specifics.

Thirdly, it is necessary to use widely known techniques(for example, teaching democracy via studying foreign languages) and to develop new ones with an active usage of civic knowledge potential of other training and education information courses aimed at shaping general culture of personality, its adaptation to society life (teamwork, communication skill development, Internet, etc.). Civic education can be integrated into training programmes in the field of ecology, entrepreneurship, farming, sustainable development of local communities, advancing women's and youth social groups, etc. It will let make civic education in context of solving the most important problems for a beneficiary.

Fourthly, the prior attention should be given to practice-orientation of training courses. It is in teachers' reliance on everyday experience and in the fact that the development of civic participation skills, origination of new initiatives, and the solution of any common problem together, etc.

Study courses should be in modules (blocks) structured, be composed of completed parts (study modules) that allow different educational trajectory of their study and usage of the same course in educational programmes of different volume and aims.

2.4.2. Development of new generation of variant workbooks and other kinds of trainer's materials aimed at values of modern democratic society

Training courses and techniques successfully tested in education process are needed to be presented in paper or electronic manuals, basic lectures, workshops, collections of tasks, reading books, glossaries, and testing systems among others.

It supposes contests, creative workshops for authors of manuals, re-training of multipliers, creation of regional testing sites to test new trainer's materials.

Publication of qualified trainer's complexes for multipliers with recommendations on usage of interactive training techniques should be given prior meaning.

2.4.3. Usage of technologies and means of distance learning

While developing training courses and manuals it is needed to direct at a wide usage of network means, multimedia technologies, specialized soft ware. A number of target groups even today can combine internal and distance education using case-studies, TV- and on-line training technologies.

2.5. Development and launching of the unified system for quality standards in education activity of NGOs

A necessity to train competent citizens and multipliers requires a further increase in the professionalism of civic education. Therefore, a problem of quality evaluation of NGOs' educational services became actual at the current stage of its development in the third sector in Belarus.

The quality of education is characterized by the degree of its correspondence to approved requirements, social norms and educational standards. Informal nature of civic education within the frame of the third sector and current level of development of networking structures of educational NGOs impedes the opportunity of working out of compulsory criteria for quality evaluation of their activity.

Along with it a unified system of such criteria could let compare quality of education services independently from their profiles and regional specific. Therefore, the most advanced in civic education NGOs can develop their interior, corporate system of educational standards. On the one hand if it meets requirements it should be a specific “entrance ticket” to corporation, and on the other hand to have recommendative nature for other organizations of civic education.

2.6. Monitoring of long-term study effects

It is very important that educational NGOs have a rule to collect systematically and analyze information about activity of participants of projects implemented, about activity appeared as a result of new agents of civic society. The efficiently set monitoring will let NGOs organize additional training, accompanying consulting for them, to correct well-timed educational programmes and training courses.

2.7. Information-analytical and marketing support to activity of educational NGOs

Development of this direction is a necessary condition for efficiency of the whole system of civic education. Anyway research and information activity marks any advanced NGO. But in perspective it is wisely to establish specialized information-analytical centers by educational coalitions, which would professionally serve the interests of organizations-members. Such centers could solve a task of two-kind: first of all, identification of needs in education, in supply of trainer's materials, new educational programmes and courses; secondly, collection and systematization of information on available educational services, holding of advertising campaign, placing requests in education.

3. Development of cooperation between educational NGOs and the state educational institutions

Creation of the national system of civic education supposes close cooperation between all society sectors: state, business and non-governmental (non-commercial). The reduction of tense and distrust between NGOs and state educational institutions (SEI) seems to be especially important, to make them opener for inter-sector cooperation and flexibility in decision-making.

Achievement of this goal becomes complicated by the fact that in contradiction to other countries there is no legislation basis regulating a mechanism of cooperation between NGOs and state structures in Belarus. For example, there is no a basic law on social partnership which would fix cooperation between NGOs and the state as a permanent process and clearly denote the main principals of partnership, a mechanism of their implementation, and responsibility of the sides. There is no special act on civic education. In the present legislation civic education is not mentioned neither as special kind of education, nor in the general notion. Nevertheless, the current frames have many opportunities for mutually-beneficial cooperation between educational NGOs and SEI which are not almost used.

3.1. The opportunities for cooperation between NGOs and state educational institutions

Educational NGOs and SEI have different possibilities of mutual interest. These possibilities can be qualified as a favorite pre-requisite for mutually beneficial cooperation between NGOs and state in development and implementation of modern policy in the field of civic education.

3.1.1. Opportunities of SEI as pre-requisites for partnership:

- Steady financing;
- Premises, lecture rooms, equipment, communication;
- Possibilities for vocational training, advanced training and staff re-training;
- Influence on elaboration and adoption of the state decisions including standard legal acts;
- Databases on target groups, statistic data;
- Analytical resource;
- Access to the state mass-media;
- Developed market of educational services.

3.1.2. NGOs' possibilities for development of partnership with the state educational structures

- Human resources — personnel, trainers;
- Premises, equipment;

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- Finance, including donors', international grants, donations, etc.;
- Customers, motivation, information on customers;
- Innovative training programmes, courses, techniques, technologies;
- Familiarity with needs of some target groups (for example, disabled people, victims of the Chernobyl disaster, etc.)
- Analytical resources;
- Abilities for competent participation in working-out of standard legal acts;
- Possibilities for free-of-charge education.

3.2. Mutual benefits of partnership between SEI and NGOs

The available possibilities of SEI and NGOs let them get extra opportunities or mutual benefits of partnership.

3.2.1. SEI can get the following benefits out of partnership with NGOs:

- opportunity to hire NGOs for providing educational services;
- extension of education activity;
- delivering exact educational services aimed at true needs of people;
- engagement of new people;
- engagement of extra resources: material resources including finance (off-budget, donors'), organizational, human, etc.;
- strengthening trust to authorities;
- shaping of a positive public opinion;
- advance training;
- new potential for problem solving, innovative training programmes, techniques, technologies;
- analytical consulting;
- monitoring of unbiased information on current situation and additional possibilities to make influence on the situation.

3.2.2. Benefits NGOs will get out of partnership with SEI:

- potential to increase participation in the market of education services;
- strengthening influence on processes of regional development and in their activity;
- opportunities to represent and lobby customers' interests in the authorities;
- participation in development of common educational projects and getting additional finance for them;
- credibility and reputation including government bodies;
- shaping of positive public opinion;
- access to information;
- increasing of educational service quality;
- advanced training.

3.3. Strategic directions for cooperation between NGO and SEI in the field of civic education

The development and implementation of common projects of educational NGOs and SEI on the following directions seem to me the most tangible:

First of all, cooperation in trainers' materials support to civic education, development of joint educational programms, training courses, manuals, etc., exchange of training techniques and technologies.

Secondly, participation of NGOs' trainers and teachers in extra educational programmes for students of secondary schools, vocational schools and colleges (optional courses, specialized courses at the students' option, study circles, etc.).

Thirdly, participation of SEI in the NGOs educational projects (teachers, material resources, target groups).

Fourthly, support given by educational NGOs to the state system of advanced training and re-training of educational personnel (off-budget finance, intellectual resource, programmes of additional education, innovative training techniques, etc.)

These I think the prior directions according which the third sector should develop civic education in Belarus in the nearest future. Of course, the offered strategy does not have pretensions to all-roundness and completion. The complex strategy development of civic education can be worked out only as a result of the common efforts of scientific and teachers' community. Just some institutional and organizational-training aspects of the issue to be considered are reflected in the present article. The content of civic education is beyond the frames of the article, this subject is for another discussion.

Notes

1. Members of the educational NGOs who participated in the Open Space “How can we develop civic education by efforts of the third sector?” also have come to this conclusion (Minsk, May 23, 2004, the minutes N 1, the group leader — Svetlana Matskevich).
2. Concept of general education school // The collection of standard acts of the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus, 1998 — N 2.
3. “How can we develop civic education by efforts of the third sector?” (Minsk, May 23, 2004, the minutes N 1, the group leader — Svetlana Matskevich).
4. See more detailed: Victor Chernov System of civic education in the third sector in Belarus // Aducator, 2004 N 1. — pp. 7–10; Irina Bugrova, Galina Veremetchik, Victor Chernov Adult education as a factor for society development: experience and perspectives for Belarus // Perspectives of public development of the Republic of Belarus. The conference materials “Belarus and the Ukraine — a bridge between expanding EU and Russia?”, May 2–3, 2003 — Dortmund — Minsk: 2003.

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A chance to survive*

The term "sustainable development" emerged and was accepted by the world-wide community because of prognosis foretelling biosphere catastrophe viewed in the 70-s of the last century. Discussions about the crisis of the civilization successfully moving to own collapse and possible ways out of the crisis are still alive and the word combination "sustainable development" is becoming more urgent and popular. A talk with the candidate of biological science, senior lecture of the International Institute of Labor and Social Relations ***Victor Ermolenkov*** *is dedicated to this subject.*

Victor Vladimirovich, how does modern science explain possible crisis reasons in the relationships between civilization and biosphere?

Let us consider the situation in the context of system theory.

TV-set, human being, virus of influenza, society, solar system, socio-nature-economic complex of our planet – all this are samples of systems. Any system consists of interdependent elements shaping something integrated. Open systems are interchanging substances, energy and information with environment – a complex of some external systems. As a result of continuous interchange systems are possible to develop.

Development is irreversible changes in time, in result of which new qualitative state (composition of elements and nature of links alter) appears. Development can take place both in complicating systems (progress) and in simplifying it (regress). The form of these processes can be either evolution or revolution (catastrophic). Catastrophe (phase transition, leap) is a situation when "straw added to a cargo breaks camel's back". Give it in other words in this case abrupt change of the system by smooth changes of parameters of environment takes place.

Development process can take place either due to environment regulating action or as a result of self-organization. **Environment regulating action** on the system often develops on catastrophic scenario as the system either "does not notice" or "does not want to accept" changes in environment. In case of self-organization the system behaves adequate to environment, without trying to create a unique situation in nature when a tail twists a dog around.

One must suppose that an adequate development variant is preferable when civilization, dog's tail, knows its place. Is it called sustainable development?

After having clarified the notion "development" we can define sustainability as reaction ability, **in action force proportional to force produced by environment**. Likewise we speak about unsteadiness when there is a discrepancy between reaction of the system and action force: inadequately strong reaction to relatively weak action and vice versa (it has thundered for a long time but peasant does not cross himself and wonder).

There are several variants of dynamic in behavior of any open system such as a separate household and socio-nature complex of the country or the planet.

Variant 1: Environment (super-system) varies regularly. A system tends to stability of elements and connections' characteristics, i.e. to equilibrium inside and to grow. Deviating from equilibrium environment actions (fluctuations) suppressed by it purposely. The growth, interesting for the system, is quantitative change. A great number of fluctuations are accumulated in the course of time. A crisis appears as a reflection of a conflict with the environment. Exactly at this stage "branching" of development scenarios take place. Unpredictability of these scenarios stipulated by the fact that any chance can direct development process of extremely unsustainable system on one-out-three ways. The following events are possible:

1) Abrupt quality change, relation harmonization with environment, and accordingly achievement of new sustainable state;
2) Collapse – a state when complexity and efficiency of the system sooner or later stabilizes but on the lower level as it even environment permits;
3) With a rise of entropy (chaos measurement) the system looses connections between elements and ceases to exist as entirety.

Variant 2. The system can have inside or create mechanisms because of which its self-organization will not require serious regulating external actions on the part of external environment. Sustainability and development here can be combined in one word-group. It is based on dynamic interaction when the system constantly estimates environment and evolves in accordance to changes in supersystem.

Namely, sustainable development is when the mankind gets feedback from the environment, pays attention to this feedback, analyses it and accordingly changes own activity? Why has not it happened yet if an idea of sustainable development is so simple? Probably, did we get feedback not only in the last century when it "suddenly" turned to be that water and air are spoiled by us and oil reserves run low?

* Шанс на выживание. Интервью с Виктором Ермоленковым // "Адукатар", №3, 2004 – С. 2–9.

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Almost all ideological constructions invented by people and economical theories as well, are aimed at mankind welfare. They fix, canonize the survival experience gained when natural resources needed for progressive civilization were rich. Environment is concerned as something infinitely abundant or at least richness constant. And these resources nature "hided inside" with a purpose that a person — invader and winner — take them and use in own purposes. Today we studying history, admire achievements the ancient people did, describing what they had achieved in "the golden age". The most important mystery for me seems to be a reason because of which these civilizations burst like soap-bubbles after "the golden age". But the reason is hided in the remote antiquity because of misunderstanding of ecology laws.

An idea that the reason is a conflict with environment was born on the gridiron and shaped only in the XX century thankfully to inquiring mind and activity of Italian businessman Aurelio Peccei. A group of like-minded people in 1968 founded the Club of Rome, a public association set the goal to analyze the world problems with the help of global humanity models interacting with environment.

A young American professor Dennis Meadows drafted the first report to the Club of Rome. His logics in modeling were deadly. It turned to be (and was approved by demographic statistics) that the priest Malthus was right captured the tendency in his **An Essay on the Principle of Population**: "population, when unchecked, **increased in a geometrical ratio**". A human being "proud" though it might sound increases as fast as any other biological kind like yeast in a can with home-brewed beer. There is the only difference in velocity. And how does "the great dream of mankind" — communism — with its goal to give people what they need look like in this connection? It looks as a nice utopia as real goals of the planet population (increasing in geometrical ratio) must be ensured by resources (food, goods, energy) also increasing in geometrical ratio. To be precise the resources ought to "increase" faster then population, as it will be necessary to meet "always increasing needs" of people. It is impossible, as the **planet is finite and everything on it has its limits**. And how is well-known in environment protection resource subdivision into exhaustible and inexhaustible? It requires to be reconsidered as increasing and consuming in geometrical ration population is able to exhaust resources of any (!) capacity.

What might happen if mankind does not think about limited resources of biosphere?

People do not still know which exactly anthropological burden the planet can bear. Bit it is clear that three kinds of eco-systems feed us: ploughed fields, hayfield-pasture and forests. Calculate square and productivity at least of it, divide into needs of one person and the result will be a number of people who can be provided by nature. Unfortunately inertia of our thinking is great. It is fixed in believes that "every day brings its own bread", in conviction that if mankind still managed to get itself out of problems, it means that it will keep on. Having such delusions people will exceed the limits of bio-sphere even under condition of stable reproducing resources. After this a strong reason comes into force: "we need to feed people!". For its sake the budget is reshaped in favor of agriculture and to the detriment of social field (culture, education, health care) and to security institutions. A result of such scenario will be forced stabilization of wild uneducated crowd which searches for enemies guilty in all troubles at the level of 11–12 billiard people, in conditions of natural regulation with the help of wars, diseases, i.e. increasing death-rate. Such scenario supposing stable resources and inertial-increasing population would be indeed not the worst outcome for mankind. The main threats are growing exactly because the resources are not unlimited as we naively hope. Moreover, they are not constant. Even forest, hayfield-pasture and ploughed fields, which can be reproduced annually, human being destroys at a rapid pace. And mainly because of it a lot of ancient civilizations have become degraded. Everything was developing in accordance with the system theory. Development and growth of civilizations in resource-rich environment, conflict with environment, inertia of environment suppression and collapse of civilization or even de-integration of this system.

Technology development, alternative energy exist. Won't "inquiring mind" find a way out of this situation?

As a matter of principal, eco-systems are able to exist indefinitely long supporting mankind. But we are modern civilization strongly "got hooked" on natural energy sources — oil, gas, coal. In this case the prognosis can be done basing on elementary school arithmetic. Even a child can count time needed for emptying a swimming pool with one pipe from which something (in our case it is natural fuel) is flowing out with the definite velocity. Having solved this task people will define the period given them for a complete substitution of resources, which are used and not replaced. Can we overcome this inert? Our forefather Cro-Magnon man put the basis for "civilization of pyromaniacs" and we have strong thought in our mind that the welfare growth (GDP as well) directly depends on quantity of energy burned.

Notion of "globalizm"

The global problems are human problems, which concern key interests of the whole civilization, each person. Appearing of **globalizm** as a direction of sociological thought is connected with the **Club of Rome** a thinktank of famous scientists, political actors who made first steps on scientific modeling of possible scenarios of the world development, global evaluation of a mankind state by the edge of two thousands. The Club of Rome was established in 1968. In 1972 the first report of the Club of Rome titled **"The Limits to Growth"**. The authors group headed by Dennis Meadows set a task with the use of computer modelling and computer technologies to identify the limits to growth of the world civilization. The results were distressing, the system crisis of civilization developing on unsustainable self-destroying way was identified. The studies of the Club of Rome set basis for searching for sustainable (balanced) ways for civilization development.

Sustainable society

Sustainable society is one, enduring over generations, that is far-seeing enough, flexible enough, and wise enough not to undermine either its physical or its social systems of support.

(Meadows, D.H., Meadows, D.L., and Randers. J. (1992))

Sustainable development

Sustainable development is a harmonious, self-supporting developing improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems.

The term sustainable development was officially introduced by the report of Gro Harlem Brudtland "Our Common Future" in 1987.

This development by which (*as it defined by the Brudtland Commission*) needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Sustainable development supposes that reservoir of capital asserts remains unchanged and increases through time.

The only possibility to survive and even fulfill our eternal aspirations to prosperity – to create such a society which will meet all basic needs of its members avoiding conflicts with environment - a society of sustainable development.

What does it look like?

Imagine a new civilization, in which forests, hayfield-pasture and ploughed fields, preserve their productivity owing to reasonable strategy ensuring sustainable exploitation. Energy needs are met at the expense of renewable resources, i.e. "solar era" in power engineering has started. The relations between people ensure psychological comfort to everybody, and thus there is no discrimination, social diseases and other plagues of society built on the law of hen-house "crab your neighbor, shit on those below". But it is the first aim, the first step on a long road.

While such society is developing a task to create conditions for welfare of future generations will become prior. You see they have the same right to use nature benefits (ecological space of definite quality). After this a revolutionary educational task could be and should be solved. Developed person will respect other kinds of life. Finally he/she will think what a torment of dumb animals are cattle-breeding complexes, zoos, circuses or laboratories for testing on animals toxicity able to affect people.

The Agenda for 21st Century

The following consolidation and working out in details a concept of sustainable development got in the document "Local Agenda 21". It was signed by 179 nations at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 as the **blueprint on achieving sustainable development**. The common and specific problems of survival, ecological security and sustainable development of civilization in one global ecological planet space were clearly emphasized for the first time in this document. The first try to produce effect on global problems in planet scale is connected with this Conference in Rio de Janeiro.

Do you consider such a perspective to be realistic?

A society where goals of economic, ecological and social sub-systems maximize in dynamic interaction can be built. Each region will move to create it using common principals in different ways. Apparently, the most evident results will be achieved at the local level.

How can we achieve this? You know the society of sustainable development you described reminds utopia dreams?

How shall we do this? First of all we need to identify the main causes of modern crisis, which can destroy the mankind. And the main of them is exactly exhaustion of fossil energy resources. If we manage to solve this problem, to go over to renewable energy sources, greenhouse effect, pollution problems and many others will be eliminated. The sustainable power engineering will require new approaches for transporting system, city design, etc. Nevertheless technologies do not solve everything. Moral backgrounds are needed here. In the present society exactly technologies try to violate nature more and more effectively.

But what will happen if we treat sustainable development as a set of technologies?

In the field of power engineering it can be already known alternative energy sources – windmills, solar generators, devices for conversion biomass into energy. The energy-saving system, for example, building heat-insulation, that is all already practiced and in use. Either lets use cogenerating. By the way, some countries set the only this task to solve. This is a core of their strategy of sustainable development.

What is cogenerating?

This is a system for supplying buildings with energy when the house is supplied with only gas. Inside the house electric energy is produced out of gas and according to the second rule of the thermodynamics: any generating gives warmness. So, we simultaneously meet both our energy needs and needs for heating house. Usually this energy is lost.

You saw yourself smoke pouring out of heat power plant.

Why do not we build energy-efficient houses? Why do not we use energy of wind and solar if everything has been already invented and successfully used?

It meets very strong resistance on different levels. Thousands of critics among officials, scientists-economists and other "specialists" who say that all this is not efficient, that windmills will not work here and solar generators are not for us - it is too cloudy. Generally speaking, this problem of a head which should understand much, get rid of eternal "may be things will come right", interlink isolated facts, look into the future. Although the sense of the issue is so simple as a spade handle – either we transit to sustainable variant of existence or continue switching up unsustainable present way. Enthusiasts-ecologists built several windmills and straw houses in Belarus. We consider them to be miracles and ecologists – eccentrics. And windmills and solar generators exist and work in the very same Denmark, ecology appropriate projects are developed. The West develops on sustainable scenario by leaps and bounds. As far as ecological dwelling for Belarus is concerned people can build by their own forces, from local materials. It will be just cheap or economically reasonable and affordable.

Does it mean to cut the forest down and to build a wooden hut?

The forest will grow. It should be cut down expertly, not to exceed what can grow for this period. As far as a house is con- →

cerned, houses differ. First of all, if we build a wooden insolated house of high quality it is already ecologically friendly. And there are new original timber designs, a kind of wooden bricks. There is air, which is good thermal insulator, inside. The building economizes with the amount of wood used. Building constructions can be of all kinds so that the materials are local. I think that a group of like-minded people can build such houses for themselves, independently of both "sellers" of super-expensive eco-technologies (which already appeared) and of officials resisting innovations. And if we speak about development of local communities, in particular rural ones, then first of all it can be groups of people united by common idea, who want to leave cities for nature.

I.e. you think that the most perspective way to get transition to sustainable development is to create eco-settlement, don't you?

Yes, this is the most harmonious and advanced way.

But not everybody wants to live in rural camps, in nature. And what do you think about such model of community development as the Local Agenda 21?

Eco-settlement is one of the variants, probably the ideal one. Because in this case like-minded people gather together and they themselves create better life in harmony with nature. But we need to educate the rest of society. Certainly, many people make a choice in favor of city life "advantages", although a modern city is obviously unsustainable system. Any power or food failures throw it into chaos and huge concourses of people, of pollution and noise in a city are other prerequisites for such chaos. As far as the Local Agenda 21 is concerned, this is a technique applicable for any community if it is created and implemented not just for form's sake.

The Local Agenda 21

The Local Agenda 21 is a long-term strategy and action plan for sustainable development of oblast, region, village, school and other kinds of communities of active people, whose aim is to ensure welfare and sustainable development of community. Such strategy is developed taking into account three important aspects — ecological, economical and social — in close cooperation with all concerned groups of local population. "Think globally, act locally" is the main principal of the Local Agenda 21.

Up to now we spoke about the crisis of modern civilizations the crisis of "biosphere-mankind" and sustainable development — as a way to solve energetic and "ecological" problems. Nevertheless the Club of Rome, mentioned above, describes crisis as social and economic as well. The Local Agenda 21 offers to use the balanced approach to solve all aspects of society life for making transition to sustainable development. Couldn't we think that insulation of houses, using of solar generators and creation of eco-settlements is a transition to sustainable development?

I keep on speaking about all these fields balance. Sustainable development relies on a strong scientific foundation of all aspects. We calculate how many these and those resources we have and what year we should replace exhaustible resources by inexhaustible ones. Social justice is a solvable task. Liquidation of life standard disproportion between the center and the provinces, "to relieve" women of everyday, almost slave labor, to hear what young people want and not to thrust them own understanding of "right" behavior. To do it just will and elementary honesty are needed. As far as economy of sustainable development is concerned up to now the field is completely undeveloped.

Globalization

Globalization is a trend towards creation of global investment environment and integration of national capital markets. Majority of independent authors writing on sustainable development think that global market economy as it is developing at the present time contradict both the spirit and the letter and the goals of the strategy of sustainable development worked out in Rio de Janeiro. Its driving force is still consumption. It serves first of all the needs of countries of "golden milliard" re-distributing the results of combined activity of the world society in their favor.

Sviatoslav Zabelin writes about rent taxation as an alternative to existing profit taxation system and wage cost. Many eco-settlements use so-called LETS-systems — virtual money for circulation inside the society.

Sviatoslav Zabelin

Sviatoslav Zabelin is the leader of Russian public association "Socio-Ecological Union", a candidate of biological science, awarded the prestigious Goldman Prize. His book "Time to Search, Time to Loose" (Moscow, 1998; Riazan, 1998) is one of the best popular Russian-language issues, dedicated to sustainable development. The book was re-issued in Belarus under the title "The Whole World is Home to Me" in 2002 (Minsk, 2002).

Different authors offered different approaches. Some of them can be used, some raises doubts as being too far-fetched. For example, an idea of "negative money". It is to save us from "economy" system's striving to growth. The sense of this idea is that when money is on bank account it does not grow but on the contrary decrease. Penal interest rate. Then a person strives to spend what he/she earned. There are a lot of ideas but it is better to unravel problems gradually. If we transited to liberal economy, we could solve very many problems. Each entrepreneur tries to input fewer resources into a product and taking into account current tendencies and needs he/she will make it ecologically friendly. Liberalization of economy is the first step. The next step is to think what restriction ecology should be imposed on economy. Only having developed truly liberal economy we could try to include environ-

mental damage caused by the product production into its price. Although right here the true difficulties in economy begin. As the product price will go to infinity as everything in nature is interdependent. It is very difficult to stop product price increasing somewhere. If to act guiding by common sense it is possible to settle everything in measure and efficiently. The practice shows that index of economic freedom is directly correlates with sulphur emission. More liberal a country is, less sulphur it emits. It turns to be that liberalization is an efficient way for fighting acidic precipitation.

The USA is considered to be rather liberal country. But it does not sign the Kyoto Protocol and no world community can make it to do it. What is a reason and how can it be explained in accordance with what has been mentioned above?

What is the Kyoto Protocol?

The Kyoto Protocol was adopted at the conference in Kyoto, Japan in 1997. The treaty obliges the countries which signed it to reduce their emission of greenhouse gases. The world reduction must come up to 5% a year. In consequence it is expected a significant reduction of pernicious contraries in air compared to the year 1990. Each country has own targets depending on the country size and on volume of emission produced by the country. For example, European Union targets at 8% reduction of greenhouse gases for 10 years, Japan – at 6%.

The scientists did not come to agreement upon whether the carbonic acid gas emission effects climate changes. For example, according to opinion of the professor of the Moscow State University Andrei Kapitsa there is no direct correlation between climate changes and the content of CO_2 in atmosphere, but what is indubitable the climate changes. This issue is considered to be settled. The European politicians sure that production acceleration led to the situation when Europe suffocates with summer hit and winter sport resorts are melting.

According to statistics the above mentioned indexes correlate, but as you see it is not absolutely. The USA's economic success and its habit to sacrifice interests of other countries in favor of own economic growth can produce very harmful stereotypes and thinking inertia.

So how can we transit to sustainable development? Liberal economy had already existed when the Club of Rome was established and it was discovered that we went “the wrong way”.

Liberal economy existed. But it is not a main condition for sustainable development. It is just the first step. The second step is imposing limits on liberal economy. This scientific problem is under intensive study. There is even the international magazine “Ecological Economy”.

What happens if liberal economy does not want to accept ecological limits?

Kyoto Protocol

How did the USA deny the Kyoto Protocol?

The story of the Kyoto Protocol has ended three years after its adoption. In November 2000 only 160 countries participated in the conference in the Hague to discuss mechanisms for the Protocol implementation. The main intrigue of the conference was disagreements between EU on the one hand and the USA on the other hand. A moment for the conference was chosen as unfortunate as possible – at the height of “transition period” in the USA. Europeans hastened (were in hurry) as one of the President Candidates, George Bush Junior, never make secret of his hostile attitude to the Kyoto initiative. Nevertheless, the parties did not manage to come to agreement.

At the last day of the conference the USA in association with Canada, Australia and some non-European developing countries could come to agreement with a group of leaders of European delegation regarding terms at which the USA ratify the treaty. The USA agreed upon the quote 40 millions “greenhouse” but in exchange they demanded for indulgences in terms of quota trading. But European delegation denied confirming the idea of their leaders and the deal was not concluded.

Making a try to eliminate a scandal one of the “negotiators” – the conference chairman and the Ministry of Nature Protection of Netherlands Jan Pronk even announced that the conference was not completed but stopped till May 2001. It is explained by the fact that the meeting's participants even did not adopt any document. For many analysts the inglorious end of the Hague conference sounded as a verdict to the Protocol itself.

What is next? Russia declared that would not sign the treaty at unfavorable terms in December 2003. At that moment when Russian authorities supported the treaty, its adoption was presented as extremely unfavorable. Compared to 1990 Russian emission of carbonic acid gas has reduced by 34% due to shutting down of plants and fabrics. It meant that Russia could not use quotes allocated to it and would get a chance to sell them to the countries, which are in short supply of them – for example, EU and Japan. On the other hand, ratification of the protocol means that majority of the countries must transfer from oil to other energy sources. And this is very unprofitable for oil exporters and in particular to Russia.

Source: News.Battery.Ru

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Right here a necessity in a balance between all aspects of developing is becoming comprehensible. A true practice of democratic values is needed. A participation in making ecologically-significant decisions is needed, i.e. all decisions. It can be achieved via freeing ecological information.

Is it possible to implement this in the nearest future? What are mechanisms to make society development more sustainable and harmonious in any country, democratic or not?

I think that adult education is the most proper mechanism.

Do you mean formal education?

Informal education to greater degree. Me, myself completed such training and better value its certificate, useless for other people, then my "formal" diploma, because I really got to know much exactly in the system of informal adult education.

What were the events that made such an impact?

These are the events of the Filamats' Association, Association of Education Amateurs, Folk University. Very competent and non-partisan specialists taught in a small group of people. It was possible to have a dialogue and in informal surrounding to talk on a subject under consideration, to get answers to any question of concern. These were completely de-ideologized events. It let me both social sector and ecology and economy to combine under one model of sustainable development. Subject succession is also important as education at the Folk University started with history, culture. These are the most important subjects. This is what turns society into society. All issues raised in the process of education were sounded and discussed.

If we speak about education in favour of sustainable development, how could you correlate a role of formal and informal education for changing people's awakening taking into account that you yourself a teacher at the university?

I will view my opinion. Informal education is more valuable for me as people come to it not with a purpose to get some real material dividends. They come, as it is their inside cognitive need. The questions accumulated and they would like to get answers to them. People come to the system of formal education to get a certificate, which will help them to get position in the social ladder, in the hierarchy accepted in the society.

There is completely different motivation there and the education process is less "human". Although naturally very many people try to settle simultaneously these issues as well. Some people have priorities in this system of knowledge, values and relations.

You conduct course on sustainable development in the university? Have you witnessed such "transformation" happened to some of your students?

Yes, of course. A public association I worked with was represented by young people who had a need to understand and a wish to participate in changing the world. At university I read lectures on ecological, nature protection subjects: "ecology", "sustainable development", "energy saving, modeling in ecology", etc. I always tried to interconnect all these in one model where economy, ecology and social spheres are interrelated. among five hundred students attended my lectures there are forty who would like to understand the course "Sustainable Development". There are five or six among them who will wish to act as activists of organization.

What do your students get having listened to the course on sustainable development: systematic knowledge on how to make society sustainable, either a supply of optimism or pessimism or apathy from understanding that a catastrophe inescapable?

First of all, they get some systematic knowledge about the world. They give answers to the most important questions to which I would say philosophy has not still answered. They understand that nature, as an super-system, is more important then we are; that many problems, riddles and mysteries of ancient civilizations are simply explained – conflicts with super-system, with environment. They start thinking about future, about what mankind and they personally are expected. They start thinking about reasons of mankind existence in general.

When we study the course on environment protection we use the problem-oriented approach. The students get understanding of reasons and try to find ways out. Understanding the fact that everything is brought together and often one right decision can lead to solution of a block of problems. It is very important. It lets protect forces from being scattered. Searching for a key link is rather fascinating. A completely new variant of mankind's existence begins to appear and it is not utopian. It is scientifically grounded. That is what they understand during education. If it happens as a system, opposed to separate pieces of knowledge, then a feeling of participation in the world processes, of unity with the world, biosphere. You start seeing nature not as a supplier of free-of-charge goods but as what really supports your life on the planet, what part you are also. And it is also what will support your children and grandchildren. Time connection appears… The existence becomes sensible.

Do you have feedback from your students? What happens to them when they come into real life, get jobs appointment.

Many of my students still call me. Sometimes their life is not easy. And a level of systematic knowledge got let them be up to the mark in questions regarding environment protection and sustainable development. It is potential. Unfortunately, up to now it is not on demand. Although very slow, time still works for them. The future is theirs.

Formal education lets train specialists in the fields of ecology, environment protection and sustainable development. Informal education in contrary gives an opportunity to "cover" wide groups of population and give them understanding of current processes and of a necessity of change. What can you say about perspectives of informal education in favor of sustainable development in Belarus?

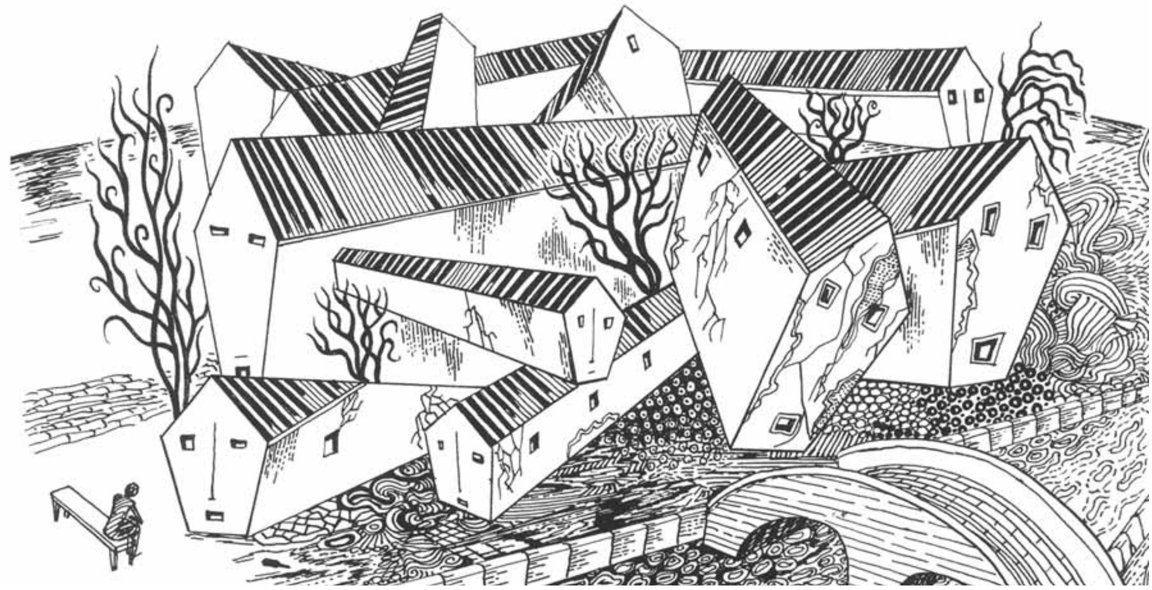
As far as informal education particularly in the field of sustainable development is concerned I would say that it simply does not exist. There is no systematic approach to this issue. There is no well-worked out scheme, where everything would be interconnected. I think that with a purpose to understand sustainable development deeply, at least theoretical background is needed. Ecology as a science can be such a background, if it is popularized and purified from excessive terminology…

I.e. we are back again to the opinion you have viewed that sustainable development is still ecology, aren't we?

It is natural. Ecology applicable to mankind's society.

If we speak about the situation in our country do you think that this knowledge, moreover systematic knowledge, not superficial, needed for every member of public associations dealing with informal education in the third sector?

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Sure. Members of public associations are not indifferent. I wish they understood in which direction to move. Currently, for example, the foundations support projects on community development and the Local Agendas 21. Let's imagine a situation, when an organization is granted and starts to write the Local Agenda 21 for a settlement. Thereby they know neither about ecology, no about interconnection between social, ecological and economic aspects. This way the idea is discredited and grant's means is wasting. Reasonably each project should be checked on a criteria for correspondence to principals of sustainable development.

You said that informal education can bring more benefits as a person himself/herself makes a choice what to study and comes moved by his/her cognitive motives.

No, I did not say that he/she could chose what course to study. My idea was that informal education is needed to be transformed into a system with a programme and the programme should have a core — an ideology of sustainable development. The priority for informal education is development of such a programme. We should give a person a system of not-contradicting knowledge, not separated data in deferent fields. Exactly a concept of sustainable development is now very important and perspective for society integration. Sustainable development is something reconciling, non-conflict for clever people, stimulating for cooperation between different sectors of the society and in different activities.

One more important moment regarding a role of informal education for sustainable development is changing of stereotypes in people's mind and behavior, discussing and adoption of new ethical norms without which true changes are not possible. Many things needed for making a transition from unsustainable development to sustainable have been known long time: there are developed recommendations for cities and villages, for different regions of the Earth, etc. But people for prestige reasons are not ready to back down a car, it seems quite normal for them to wear skin of dead animals or treat animals like prisoners. Sustainable development is impossible to come true without ecological ethic. What is under discussion within the frames of formal or informal education if it is a question of ethics? These are interactions between boys and girls, parents and children, Europeans and Arabians. Our interactions with pigs we do not consider. In general we don not consider our interactions with nature. Our interactions with future generations we also do not consider: they do not exist yet — should we have moral obligation to them? These questions are very important for sustainable development. Otherwise young people will never limit themselves and will jealously see towards the West. “Let me live so as people live in Sweden and I will also call for environment protection”, — my students sometimes say to me. Informal education can take responsibility for all these new questions, until awkward-to-handle inert machine of formal education is “swung”.

Interviewer **Natalia Riabova**

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"You have NO position — you have NOTHING"*



"Independence, mobility, actuality are the most important inherent characteristic of informal education", — *Svetlana Koroliova thinks.*

Perhaps, without it is not an exaggeration to call Svetlana Koroliova history patrimony of Belarusian public youth movement. She conducted pioneer creation of the first truly youth public association in Belarus "Next Stop — New Life", she was among those who established Rada — Belarusian Union of Youth and Children's Public Association. Today, Svetlana Koroliova came to work to Rada again as the Chairperson of the Presidium. Natalia Riabova talked with Svetlana Koroliova about the past and the present of Rada, about youth policy and youth informal education.

N.R. Having returned to youth policy and to Rada after a significant break how can you evaluate the changes happened?

S.K. It is a brief excursus to history for the beginning. First of all, I should say that it began in a quite different time frame. An idea to establish the National Council emerged in 1994. That time we first heard about an idea to lobby interests of youth organizations to the State. Significant uniting of youth organizations took place in Belarus in 1997. It was a unique event as at the exact same time the Belarusian Patriotic Youth Union was being created. As youth organizations did not want to enter that strange union with a clear ideology orientation, Rada was a consolidating alternative for them. In 1997 Rada defined three directions to follow: interactions with the state institutions, international policy and educational programmes. And all these were very interesting as that time it was impossible to talk about youth policy as such. That time there was no definition and clear mechnism of such policy in the state. We stood at the cradle of starting a dialogue with the state structures and we learned how to make this dialogue.

That time one of the most interesting educational programmes in the Rada was the programme "Tuteishia". Its goal was to create national regional councils. It consisted of 4–5 day seminars, where we organized panel discussions with the representatives of the state establishments responsible for youth policy. It was application of theoretical knowledge got at the seminar. We trained youth leaders who could set this dialogue. These discussions each time differed. The state committees on youth policy said how they perceived public associations and in the same way youth organizations said about their perception of the state bodies. Both sides got clear stereotypes about each other. But it was very interesting and useful experience. I think that "Tuteishia" was one of the most successful programmes of Rada although it did not achieved the goals announced: not so many regional councils were established (only in Grodno region — "Rada 23").

At that time in 1996–1997 the European School for Youth Leadership conducted by the Council of Europe was transmitted via Rada. Three such programmes took place in Belarus, youth leaders openly discussed the following questions: What is Europe? **What is position of Belarus in Europe? What are democratic values? What is leadership? How are decisions made? What is lobbying?** These were very interesting projects, after these international educational events many contacts were set. At that time we spoke a lot about the youth, youth policy and perspectives. That time a specific "ferment" was being created, which did not manage to transform into something more serious, because of the further state policy. It was different time, different opportunities. That time Rada was much stronger then the BPYU in terms of membership, of international contacts and motivation.

I think that changes started already in 2003. External situation has changed. And organization sharing European democratic traditions and values, which suppose **legal state; game rules; pluralism; lobbying channels; dialogue; laws** after all could not any long fulfil its goals. We did not invent this model, we just wanted to use it in Belarus. Rada was created according to such principal and acted basing on these pre-conditions. And when the BRYU was created with intrigues the youth public associations started to be closed down, Rada established with a purpose to protect interests of the youth organizations did not know how to protect them but moreover in general did not know **what to do**.

* Нет позиции — значит, нет ничего. Интервью со Светланой Королевой // "Адукатар", №2(5), 2005 — С. 2–6.

The past and present Rada differ significantly. Two years already it was obvious that Rada had not fulfilled its mission and not played its role. The organization has started to spin wheels, and its activity became non-efficient, as it could not achieve the goals declared.

Why did it happen so? A complete rotation of the Presidium has happened, it was not ready to such political situation. Abrupt decrease in number of organizations' members resulted from inertia for 2–2,5 years. The most terrible thing was that Rada did not have its own position. You have no position, you have nothing. Rada can not be neutral, invisible which it tried to be as it had a quite different mission – to protect, to dispute, to lobby interests of youth organizations, international policy. These goals are very sound. Because these goals were not achieved many quit, they thought that the state could to close down Rada easily. And I think that closing Rada down would be the saddest result for the youth movement and youth policy in Belarus.

N.R. Is it worse then Rada lost its face?

S.K. It is worse, as any organization can be altered, modified and brought back to life. Rada has not only national but international statues. It has been waiting for 7 years until it became a member of the European Youth Forum. The Ukrainian Rada has not yet entered the EYF. We have proved that we are a good partner – coherent and reliable. It is a very important aspect. Unfortunately, at the present time Rada has become fundamentally different. We have altered mission and goals. We have extracted interactions with the state structures out of our strategic directions. Why should we knock at the closed door? It is completely senseless.

The second moment is that we want to alter the Statute so as not only republican but city and regional organizations could be members of Rada. Currently, national status just limits our activity. We would like that any organization, which agrees upon the principal that a person has the right to freedom of association, could consolidate with us.

N.R. What is your current mission?

S.K. The mission was stated after a long process of discussion and agreeing in the strategic planning. The statement we agreed upon sounds honestly and is given for a shirt-term period (one year):

In 2005 Rada sees its mission in asserting priority of association and of assembly via consolidating youth and children's public associations of Belarus around Rada.

We unite with the associations, which agree that any person has the right to participate in any association he/she wants to participate in. Whether we are able to consolidate, the end of the year 2005 will show. It is obvious that the aim is ambitious but it is the only mission which allows us to express a position that a young person has the right to freedom of association. It is a problem in our country, we defined it and our mission is aimed at its solution. Of course, I do not think that this problem is able to be solved in a year, but under political instability we made a decision to make strategic planning only for a year. We cannot make any long-term plans.

N.R. What status do educational programmes have in your mission, in your strategic plans?

S.K. It is one of the most important strategic directions. Youth politics should be made by young people, for example, my engagement in it is temporary and enforced. Thus, Rada's goal is to train young leaders. The youth should get knowledge, experience to be able to speak common language; to gain thinking experience on youth politics and the role of a young person in the society. First of all, it is needed to reflect, to shape thoughts and afterwards to offer some actions. It requires a definite experience and skills, at which shaping our educational programmes are aimed. When I returned to Rada I saw that this aim – education and training of young leaders, who are able to think about youth politics, to state problems and necessities of the youth, to act together, to make dialogue with all parties concerned is missing. It turned to be that people working at Rada and those with whom Rada works are missing experience. But it is a matter of time. It is one of the reasons why nowadays education of one of three priority directions. We wish to create systematic education. Exactly this distinguishes our current programmes from those that the organization started with. By "systematic education" we mean an accurate cycle when a person undergoes sequentially all needed stages and afterwards gives a feedback. Fixation and analysis of the results gained and transition to a new development stage. Within our training system young leaders should study all subjects of the course, then train skills in a simulation game, and only after this they will able to work at the local level as enlighteners or organizers. These people are ready to get engaged in national or international politics. Our educational project "The Academy of the First", which is being implemented by Rada in association with the International enlightenment association "AKT", is based on this idea.

In this project the participants get along from identifying themselves in the world to identifying their organizations, society, our position in Europe, etc. We go along from the small "ego" towards more global things and problems. And this is not only a discourse, this is knowledge and skills which our participants get in discussions at the seminars. As I have already mentioned we develop the simulation game for all theoretical courses, it will help to work out skills on self-identification, decision-making, teambuilding in practice.

The participants of "The Academy of the First" are highly motivated people. We got 64 applications for 25 vacancies. It shows that the project was claimed. But what amazed me at the first seminar was deformed definition of objectives and value system of young people. It is a question of acceptance of values forced by the state (stoup and cracknels). A flat, career, wife (husband), car are dreamboat of a modern young Belarusian. We honestly discussed at our meetings – **what do you need all these for?** What is a career, what for? Either for buying a flat and gaining a footing or for being an expert – economist, banker or teacher – does not matter, being a phenom. **"I want to have..."** It is a mixture of ideology of consumer society blindly accepted caused by longing for beautiful inaccessible west life and dependent ideology which is being forced by our state system. **"I want to have"** and saying it you do not know what you want and what you will give instead or you do not care. "Social direction" the state must take care of you but as it cares very poorly then the rest you will have to wrest in a dead-set fight. At the beginning when a group of participants reflected these stereotypes characterizing our young people I got a fright. People are values lost. And we openly discussed it. This is a matter of a personal mission. Either you live to earn as much money as possible or to realize yourself and to do something important demanded in the society (money and acknowledgement are resulted from it).

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N.R. What stage does this project at and do you get feedback from the participants?

S.K. Two cycles have already taken place, and we get feedback and see results – people think, learn to shape their needs. Still it is just thinking and reflecting. It is impossible to gain skills or other kind of sustainable result within a tree-day course. Nowadays we are developing a simulation game. We even thought to have an organizational-activity game but still rested on the simulation one. The goal is to create all prerequisites and conditions to enable our participants to "live" the situations regarding definition of objectives, motivation and conflicts. Such a game will be a concluding event after three theoretical cycles. Besides theoretical and practical courses we forward our participants to internships and keep close contacts to them. We train people who are able to speak to us the same language and be our partners.

N.R. Who are your participants?

S.K. They are young leaders of youth organizations and initiatives, members of coordinating board – people who make decisions.

N.R. How will you evaluate the programme efficiency?

S.K. We think that if there are 4 leaders from 25 people and 10–12 course participants are able to implement their ideas into life – we fulfill our task.

N.R. You told that Rada in its educational programmes has transformed to more systematic approach. Do you think that it is a natural "evolutional" process of informal education development?

S.K. It is needed for Rada because it helps us to achieve our goals. Rada has continuity and we should train people who move to the national level from local organizations. Exactly systematic approach to education helps to ensure training of these people.

N.R. Some authors of our magazine viewed an idea that informal education certainly must get system attributes, that occasional seminars on these and those subjects do not good and do not achieve the goal. I even heard a remark toward educational events of the third sector which sounded as follows: *"You play the dickens with immature mind".*

S.K. I think that charm of informal education is that there is diversity, initiative and fantasy. Informal education will always alter, change subjects, forms and techniques. Especially it regards youth public associations and educational projects for the youth. The youth is more inclined to innovations, creativity and generating new ideas. Partial system and random seminars in any way help participants to get liberated, to learn how to shape their opinions, to work in groups, to persist on their opinion, to get new contacts. I think that both ways should be. Closed, formalized system is called "marsh".

N.R. How do you define informal education, its meaning and aims?

S.K. Myself, informal education is optional but important subjects, various forms and techniques. Formal education is approved subjects, programmes and techniques afterwards approved by diplomas and certificates. Informal education in intended for not useless entertainment, it educates. But its main objective is to introduce a person into knowledge field, which is needed for an exact action. It differs from formal education which also declares practical succession of knowledge but it does not ensure it. Having got a certificate or diploma testifying theoretical knowledge we get job to learn "life practice". Informal education is acquired via self-cognition first of all and secondly it gives knowledge needed at the moment to make a necessary action in the situation. A product got as a result of such education does not belong to a teacher, it belongs to a participant. This product is created together with participants and belongs to them.

N.R. As far as a technique is concerned, it comes out that when the state educational establishments widely apply techniques allowing participant to comprehend their experience and create knowledge for themselves, then a difference between formal and informal education vanishes?

S.K. It regards not only a technique which allows participants to create knowledge themselves and adopt it. It regards also accuracy and efficiency of knowledge and skills gained. For example, seminar on fundraising is a "short-life product". This year these funds operate and they have these requirements, next year – quite other. It regards youth politics or course for the unemployed. All these are done in proper time and on urgent subjects and help a person to use knowledge got in real time. Two always-altering factors which are poorly taken into consideration by formal education (and does not follow the changes) and to which informal education is responsive – 1) changing environment and 2) changing requirements and customer needs. A person will never participate in seminar if it is not interesting to him/her or useless. Certainly if a person is not self-determined, he/she can turn into a "permanent participant" – sustainable development today, PR tomorrow, woman rights the day after tomorrow, then leadership, then fighting AIDS, etc. But when a person defines himself/herself with interests he/she starts clearly choose what he/she needs for further self-realization. If such self-realization has not taken place, it means that a person needs to return to the very first level – definition of objectives.

So, the main characteristic of informal education is mobility, accuracy, using of innovations and truly customer's demand. And another important feature: it is not the state education, it is independent.

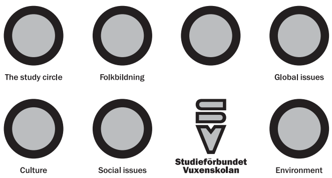
N.R. What subjects do you think to be the most important in informal education of young people?

S.K. I think that the most important subject especially in education of young people is leadership. I think that a task of leader education can be fulfilled only by informal education. First of all, it cannot be done as mass education. The state system of education does not have possibilities to make it within the frames of its regular curriculums scheduled in subjects and class hours nor yet aimed at it. For it another state model is needed. Although, it is basically possible.

The most popular subjects among young people are leadership, motivation and resolving conflicts. Thematic or volunteer summer camps are on demand. What I consider to be the most important is clear understanding of the aim of educational event and a possible result. Any group which takes money for conducting educational seminar must have a clear idea what it wants to achieve and have feedback with the participants after the seminar is completed. ■

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Welcome to the world of SV



Welcome to the world of study circles*

Aliona Velichko



Aliona Velichko, trainer of Public Union "Education Center «POST»", coordinator of joint project with SV-Stockholm "Education for population" which is aimed at developping the idea of study circles in Belarus.

My personal acquaintance with study circles happened quite a while ago. And I immediately felt if not love then smth very warm towards this form of non-formal education. Study circles were introduced to us by Swedish organization SV Stockholm (Studieförbundet Vuxenskolan) who were our partners in Belarusian-Swedish project. Therefore the whole idea of study circles is strongly connected for me with a faraway mysterious Sweden which has always been associated for me with four things: my favourite childhood book "Carlson on the roof", Swedish family (this is how we call in Russian the family where there are three partners), Swedish table (this is how we call "buffet") and Swedish "wall" (this is how we call a special sport construction).

Though when we came for a short study visit to Stockholm to know more about study circle method it turned out that Swedish people have no idea about Swedish family and Swedish wall and our favorite character Carlson on the roof is far from being adored.

But we had a wonderful opportunity to see with own a lot of things about study circles some of which were really new for us. And though it is better to see once than to hear hundred of times I will start my story about Swedish study circles and what make them so special.

About roots…

The roots of the history of non-formal adult education go as deep as 150 years back in the history and lead us to the beginning of 19th century. It was an interesting time for Swedish society which was changing from agrarian one to industrial. These changes stimulated the development of a lot of political parties and movements which needed new members. In 1842 there was introduced the law about compulsory education which raised the question about illiterate adults. It was the time of spreading the enlightening ideas of Grundtvig, a very famous Danish philosopher and pedagogue who tried to change the situation and establish folk schools. Non-formal education with folk schools and study circles which appeared at that time were a good instrument to solve the problems in the society of that time.

Nowadays in Sweden adults have got a lot of opportunities to get non-formal education: municipality schools, folk high schools and study circles. It is impressing how many people are or have been involved in study circles. Organization SV Stockholm is one of the biggest and has got as many as 60 000 study circles. And they are not the only organization who is involved in this..

On the one hand study circles are 70% subsidized by the state and controlled by the national council of adult education which spreads out the subsidies and controls the activity of study circles. And on the other hand study circles are free in choosing the topics for study circles and are partly financed by participants fees.

About the trunk...

In spite of all the variety of study circles they all have common aims. It is like a lot of brunches have a common trunk. And when the society changes the aims of study circles also undergo some changes. If earlier they were aimed at spreading information and knowledge with time it became less relevant and more emphasis has been given to the development of democratic values and social changes.

How can these aims be achieved? First of all the communication in study circles among people of different social background, their discussion of various topics strengthens democratic and cultural processes. There have been made several researches on investigating the democracy processes in the study circles specializing in knitting.

* Величко А. Знакомьтесь: шведский учебный кружок // "Адукатар", №1, 2004 — С. 20–23.

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And the gained results showed that even in such study circles people learn to listen to the others, express their opinion through talking to each other while knitting or during coffee breaks.

One can immediately remember old women sitting near the multistoried building talking about everything in the world. Though it can remind a bit a study circle but just talking is not enough. There is a need for a leader who has got all the necessary skills to organize the discussion and the work in a study circle. And also there is a need in study materials. So when there is a leader, participants and study materials study circle can start.

Leaders can be different

Approaches towards choosing a study circle leader may differ. The first variant is when a leader is chosen from the members of a study circle and (s)he is not a trained one. As a rule such person is active and is considered by the other participants to be a good leader. The other approach is when a leader is known from the beginning ((s)he announces the topic) and then people apply for the topic and the leader. Such leaders have been trained as a rule and have some experience in working with the topic.

It is interesting that in both cases a leader isn't necessarily an expert in the topic of a study circle. Main thing about him (her) is that (s)he shouldn't be necessarily an expert. The main thing is that a person should have certain organizational skills to work with a group, interest in the topic and also a wish to create conditions for the group to reach the set aim.

Study circle principles

Speaking about the ideal study circle model I would like to enumerate the main principles.

- **Equality of study circle participants**, and absence of traditional hierarchy: a teacher - students. It means that not only a study circle leader carries responsibility for preparing materials for the classes, setting the aims and organizing the work but also the participants.
- Informal and friendly **atmosphere**.
- Lack of competition among the participants. Cooperation in reaching common aims.
- **Aims** in a study circle are defined by the participants and they bear the responsibility for reaching these aims. Here it is very important to negotiate the aims of the participants on the first meeting.
- Studying in a study circle is **organized and planned** since the very beginning and the topics are approved or composed by the participants.
- There is a **variety of methods** used which create a good balance between studies and communication.

Study circles as a rule consist of 7–12 people including a study circle leader. If there are less people there may arise difficulty with keeping the conversation going. If there are more people it can become more difficult for the participants to be active and express their opinions and be heard by the others.

In general there are 8–10 meetings in a study circle which are held regularly once a week or two weeks. The length and regularity of the meetings is also defined by the participants of a study circle. Usually it is not less than an hour and a half and not more than three hours.

How to set a conversation going

In a study circle it is very important for a leader to arrange a cooperation among the participants. A very important role in this case belongs to the methods that are used for working with a topic. Here are some methods that are mainly used in study circles.

- **Individual work**

Participants are given time to think over a question for 3–5 minutes and then share their thoughts with the others. The main ideas may be fixed on a big sheet of paper. Here it is very important for every participant to be heard.

- **“Busy bees”**

A group is divided into pairs which are given one question to be discussed for a couple of minutes. The discussion as a rule is very noisy – like humming of bees. And then every pair presents the results of their work which are written down on a big sheet of paper.

- **Group work**

Similar to the previous method but the discussion goes in small groups and the results of group work may be commented from other participants.

- **Talk**

Talk is organized for the whole group to discuss some topic in a constructive way. It is good to discus in such way a book or a film. This all may be combined with drinking tea or coffee.

From theory to practice

Change from theory to practice always faces certain difficulties. Mainly due to the lack of experience in it, peculiarities of our mentality and also previous educational experience.

We couldn't avoid all these difficulties when implementing Belarusian-Swedish project “Development of civic society” whose main objective is spreading the knowledge in the sphere of civic education through study circle method. Swedish side in the project is represented by SV Stockholm and Belarusian side by the Association of Civic Education. The project covered around 800 non-associated in NGO activity citizens. The first results of organizing study circles showed that though it is not that easy as it seemed in the beginning but still possible. The study circles which were organized by ten NGOs covered various target groups: women, unemployed, deputies, students.

As for me I organized a study circle fro young women on the topic “New horizons in the life of a woman”. The study circle program was negotiated with the participants at the first meeting and included such topics as “free time”, “men and women relationships”, “educating children”, “image”, "literature and music", “decorating the house”, “building up self-confidence”. Each topic covered 1–2 meetings and the emphasis was given to changes in life,

how to see perspectives, define areas of interest. During these meetings the group united, shared their experience, supported each other.

Sharing responsibility for organizing meetings among the participants was a very good thing. Every participant tried herself in the role of a leader and it helped to build up self-confidence and improve skills of working with the group.

As a leader I faced certain difficulties which I would like to divide into two groups.

Style of leadership

Swedish study circles are similar to the circles that we have in our non-formal education. Mainly in the way that there is also a group of people who get together to spend their free time on learning to do smth, usually connected with handicrafts.

But there are several very important differences and one of them is the role of the leader and participants. A leader in study circles creates conditions for self-fulfillment of the participants, and works not as a teacher but as a facilitator. Besides any participant can try to be a leader at one of the meetings. The style of a leader is close to the democratic style of seminar leader and the methods which are used are very close to the methods used at a seminar. And for those who have got the experience of teaching or training other people it is difficult not to build a meeting of a study circle as a lesson at school or day at a seminar. It is very important to remember about the non-formal role of a study circle and its balance between getting knowledge and building a communication.

Conditions

In Sweden the tradition of study circles is supported by the state and they are very well organized on a regular basis. It is very different from our situation where the whole idea of adult non-formal education is not supported by the state.

Though it is difficult to find a place for holding study circles as not every flat is big enough for 12 people but it is possible. And also there are some offices of organizations which are used for organizing study circles. My study circle for example was held in my flat.

There are problems also with finding the participants for study circles. First of all we face the difficulty because people don't know what study circle is and they are very careful with everything what is new. But after participating in study circles the participants find them very effective and good and want to participate more. Every organization as a rule involves mostly participants from their target groups, for example from the members of organization or participants of the trainings and seminars. And it works.

Financing is also the matter that should be considered carefully. In Sweden people pay a small fee for participation in study circles and the leaders get paid from the state. How it will be here – the time will show. In our study circles the participants as a rule collect money for tea, biscuits and materials that they need for their activities.

From the questionnaires of the study circle participants

- "...I enjoyed this form of education a lot. It is quite democratic, without stamps, with a lot of opportunities to show the initiative. You can influence the process and the result and it is very important!" **Natasha**
- "...I learned a lot of interesting and useful information in an interesting communicative form. In the result I am satisfied a lot with talking with interesting people. Besides I have got new friends and I hope to continue our friendship." **Anna**
- "...I tried to participate actively in the discussions, was open and sincere in communication with others." **Ilona**
- "...the form of organizing meetings was very free – in talking, discussing, with sense of humour – it is great. It is very important that in the beginning the leader emphasized that every participant is responsible for preparing material for some meeting. And in my opinion it worked. May be this is the main difference of this form of education from the others." **Natasha**
- "...all members of the group were active, friendly and open and everybody tried to achieve the common aims." **Tatiana**
- "...at the study circle there is no need to touch very theoretical things, it means the talks should be clear, open, interesting and with the sense of humour. The contacts should be informal and friendly." **Olia**

To promote the idea of study circles there has already been created a center for educating adults and study circles are one of the main directions of its activity. May be during the work with study circle method and its adaptation to our reality it will undergo certain changes. But we would like to preserve the main democratic principles and values on which it is based.

Literature:

1. Tove Rosendal. "Study Circle Leaders'. Training and Reference Manual". SV-Stockholm.
2. Carina Kindstrom. "The study circle method". SV-Stockholm.
3. Lennart Falegard. "How to write study material for study circles". SV-Stockholm.
4. "Welcome to the world of SV". SV-Stockholm.

How can a trainer upgrade own competence?

The opportunities that we use, potential which is still left *

Tatiana Krasnova

This article describes and analyzes the experience of the study circle for trainers which took place last year and is still going on.

The text is built on consideration of three main questions:

- Who does the initiative of creating this study circle belong to?
- What topics and activities have been put into practice recently?
- What are the perspectives of such work?

Analyzing the gained experience I will use the opinions of study circle participants that they wrote in the questionnaires and at the final introspective stage (according to the results of the year).

PAST

How it all started

This study circle appeared as a result of the project "School for trainers"[1] which revealed the need for creating a special "place" which could unite and support the trainers' community of Belarusian NGOs. The problem was how to implement this idea if there is no finances i.e. it is not financially supported as a project. And the main question sounded like: **How should this community on self-support and self-development function (without attracting external experts) so that very busy trainers could spend their time on self-development?**

In autumn 2003 there was made the first attempt to organize joint voluntary movement of trainers aimed at development of their professional competence. The first step was made through spreading among trainers information letter. There was offered to think about possible means to upgrade the trainers 'competence. Also there was outlined the topic for discussion **"How to work out the programs of various types of interactive seminars?"** This topic at that period of time seemed very important. On the one hand everybody seem to have common idea about making a program but on the other hand when discussing it the trainers team go through various types of communication (questions, team discussions, negotiations and conflicts).

In the first informational letter there was outlined the problem field:

- A seminar — is it a unique event or we can speak about the technology of educational seminars which we use without knowing really a lot about it?
- What do we put as the basis of educational process at a seminar, how does our participant develop? Do we cultivate, push, suggest and retreat ...?
- What logic or connections between sessions[2] do we use? And what logic exists during a session?
- What allows or doesn't allow us to see a seminar as an integrity?
- Who, when, where and how managed to make a seminar "according to Colb model"?
- Is a seminar one of the types of experimental learning or is it our myth?
- How can we work with a program (before a seminar and during it)?
- How can we involve participants in the process of making a program? etc.

May be the most important in this first letter was the question to the community about people who would like to spend their time and intellectual efforts on this idea. Fortunately there was a number of people for whom this idea seemed to be interesting and they started to work together in a Swedish study circle.

Looking closer at the gained experience

Trainers community — is it Utopia?

"On the whole it was an interesting new experience of cooperation with «old» faces. Though at some stages

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* Краснова Т. Как тренеру повышать свою компетентность "подручными средствами"? // "Адукатар", №1(4), 2005 — С. 26–29.
[1] The project "School for trainers" was fulfilled by two partnership organizations from Belarus and Sweden 2001–2002.
[2] Session means a period of time at the seminar which lasts as a rule an hour and a half.

there was an intellectual exhaustion. It is good that it was possible to prolong the norms of the community «School for trainers»" (Lena K.) "It is very good to have a study circle for trainers even though we all are very busy. It provides an opportunity to make pauses and introspect own activity." (Dima K.).

It is very interesting to fix one moment: even after a year of attending the study circle when answering the question "What other topics are interesting for you?" the majority of trainers had difficulty with suggesting definite topics. It is interesting why it happened so? It doesn't seem that the trainers were intellectually "constrained" but it is more likely that it was difficult for them to find common topics and types of activity which could be productive for this community and helped to achieve pragmatic results. (It is important not only what to discuss but also why to do it or better say what can we do with this discussion.) In other words such interpretation puts us back to the problem of the basis of trainers' community or how we can be useful for each other. And this problem is not trivial as its solution should be "real". Just "bare" motivation like "let's just meet because we feel fine together and we can spend a nice time" is not enough for this community. For example during "Open space" method devoted to the problem "How we can develop civic education with the efforts of "the third sector?" (Minsk, 2004) the group which worked with the topic "How and (why) should we develop the Union of civic education including 70 members?" outlined the following "needs" of such union (we would like to mention that the whole problem under the discussion was much wider – the community of NGOs – but the problem itself is very close to the one which is discussed above):

- solving complicated problems (coordination of joint projects);
- protection (common lobbing, juridical consultation);
- exchange of experience (through the magazine "Adukatar", joint projects, meetings, conferences);
- Making the revision of the situation: who works in what directions (for example editing the reference-book with the addresses of representatives);
- PR.

The answer which was received by the group illustrated that there are not so many "real" mechanisms which can fulfill such compatibility. May be the most reliable ones are financed common project, common activity... and may be that's all? Or no? Can we support the trainers' community through study circles where they can exchange their experience and analyze programs of seminars? Further we will discuss the lack of means to fulfill these types of activity. And one more difficulty which is crucial for a study circle: professional activity of a trainer is too wide topic. On the one hand it creates flexible and mobile situation and on the other hand always makes participants to make a choice at every step they make in order to focus their mind and make it more productive and definite.

Working with the content

The content of the study circle didn't present a logical consequence of topics but rather resembled a free traveling around the town which you know very well. There were used various types of activity.

- discussing the seminars which were planned;
- analyzing the seminars which were held;
- experimenting with new methods (for example introducing the participants to "the position of participants");
- working with the texts trying to find the solution to some problems typical for our practice.

We tried to discuss various topics:

- An effective seminar (discussing the experience of holding a seminar "Development of local communities: singling out the problems and finding the ways of their solution"). (Kiev, 2003)
- Learning styles and a seminar program
- The opportunities of making a learner-centered program (analysis of the article "How to make the participants of the program its accomplices" by Larissa Kiriluk.
- Ways of presenting the program of the seminar.
- ole expectations from the seminar.
- Using the scheme "challenge – realization of the content - introspection" for working out the program of a seminar (the experience of making the seminar "Developing critical thinking through active learning methods").
- Resistance of seminar participants.
- "Open Space" as a technology of working with large audiences.
- Experience of working out and holding seminars:
  - "Working out the program of a study course in active learning startegy" (Kiev, 2004).
  - "Professional competences of an NGO trainer" (Ternopol, 2004).
  - "Me and a group" (Novogrudok, 2004).
  - "Study discussion: from processing to constructing knowledge" (Minsk, 2004).

And now some analytical comments about the things that were mentioned above.

Soon after the beginning of the study circle we found out that we "lost" the subject of work that was announced in the information letter (constructing a seminar program). "The subject was very blurred and was hard to get" (Lena K.) Why did it happen so? There can be various interpretations. For example the topic was very difficult, "not clear" and "sliding away" or "alien", given to the participants from the outside.

According to the participants the most useful was the process of discussing certain seminars and programs "topics which are relevant and real" (Inna G.). At the same time we discovered several interesting prob-

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lems. For example how "to get" the experience of the seminar at which you were not present? How to describe your own experience to another trainer? It seemed that all the participants worked in the same field and there are certain general schemes of making the programs etc. Nevertheless analyses of the programs revealed how hard it is to reconstruct the events of a seminar. When programs are transparent for the colleagues it is really very interesting and curious revelation. The question which is quite reasonable sounds like: may be one shouldn't expect too much from the text of the program? It is quite possible. And also it is very necessary to distinguish the situation of transparency for the colleagues and for the participants of a seminar. The most important thing in the "life" of a study circle is in my opinion is stating that such work has got a big potential for trainers introspection. It is a unique opportunity to feel from the inside the situation which happens at the beginning of every seminar — discussing the suggested program with the participants.

Very interesting was the problem: how to analyze a seminar — the way it happens, "as you can" or some other way? At the meetings we tried various ways: for example through correlating the planned aims and acquired results; there was made an interesting attempt to rationalize the elements of a seminar which make it successful. It was interesting to analyze through fixing the unexpected things which impressed trainers. Gradually there appeared such norm of analysis as getting an open feedback from other trainers.

But such matters as means of analysis as well as concepts of the seminars which could be at the same time the schemes of analysis still remain open and relevant…

Study circle of trainers — a form of communication or a spare time?

"… Learning form without definite objective and which is given a lot of time allows the participants to take more responsibility". (Elena K.) "Effective form gives opportunity in a relaxed atmosphere to discuss smth important for the participants and at the same time gives more than a mere education". (Olia S.) "A very flexible technology which makes education process less formal." (Dima G.) "Study circle for trainers is more connected with the profession than just a hobby." (Dima K.)

Does a study circle for leaders need a program?

The analysis of the gained experience discovers a dual attitude towards the "flexible" advancing in the content that happened this year. On the one hand **the refusal from the structure** allows preserving the peculiarity of a study circle as a form of education. "Structure may turn a study circle in one more work" (Olia S.) or one more variant of formal education. On the other hand the participants expressed the wish "to make a study circle program…with a possibility to correct it" (Inna G.); "there is a lack of systematic approach as well as consistency. It would be better first to make a program and then to improve it; there was not enough structure in the program, meetings, participants." (Ira B.).

Looking back at the first meeting I can't but mention the failed attempt to make a program of the study circle with the help of mind mapping. It is interesting that this year the work has started also without any preliminary program. We discuss different programs and the experience gained by the participants at the seminars. May be in such way the participants fulfill their need in pragmatic aspects.

It is interesting that the participants differentiated such functions of the study circle as educating and introspective which are to a certain extent opposed. As for the educating methods which have been practiced this year we can name only one — problematising (Elena K.) And in such situation the objectives are seen as search for, rationalization and practice of mediators both for analyzing programs and exchanging experience.

What result is possible in this situation?

- "There wasn't any common result" (Elena K.);
- "A good way of self-education" (Dima G.);
- "… managed to work with own needs" (Dima G.);
- Advancing in the content: methods of group discussion, understanding the phenomenon of participants resistance (Irina B.);
- Singling out the problematic areas of trainers work (Inna G.);
- Local results referring certain styles, expectation of the participants (Lena K.);
- Almost everybody states that the work in the study circle allowed to change own professional activity. For example "opportunity to use gained experience in professional work, finding new problematic areas of trainers work." (Inna G.).

The frequency of meeting: how many, when, where?

The flexibility of study circle work supposed that we were free to choose the time for meetings: it was negotiated with all study circle participants. The shortcoming of this principle was that sometimes we had long breaks that slowed down the process of advancing.

Future that changes into present

What topics and types of study circle activities seem to be perspective for the future practice of the participants? The list of topics below illustrates the group opinion:

- Working with large groups;
- Studying the foreign experience of trainings;
- Trainers competences, difficulties and findings, problems of university education;

- Discussing narrow, definite, applied matters and cases;
- Product-centered approach;
- Experience exchange with other participants (for example during certain sessions);
- Training for trainers.

It is still relevant looking for the mechanisms of study circle work which can make a study circle a tool for developing our seminars practice instead of making a burden out of it. "It is clear that bare experience is not enough. Without regular supervision and analysis the mistakes which are made only become stronger because of being repeated." [1, C. 570]. To a certain extent we can speak about creating **a service practice which offers trainers means of professional analysis of seminars**. Such practice is waiting to be constructed! Or to b be more exact to be specified. (though we should say that such kind of activity in a study circle may be only one of many other forms).

The existing forms of analyzing trainings and other forms of group work should be carefully considered: institution of supervision, tradition of Balint groups[3], on-line communication etc. We should mention that it is not smth totally new For example the experts of trainings for the trainers state that "for a number of year there has existed a need which has finally been expressed - about different forms of supervision: group and individual. I would even call them a supervision support which could help to develop those trainers that actually don't need special education." [3].

Supervision, Ballint groups that appeared some time ago in certain spheres — psychoanalysis and practice of training doctors — today are being transformed stimulating the appearance of new forms and types for various kinds of professional activity. And this fact is interesting and it is interesting to consider the advantages and threats of spreading this practice on adjacent professions. The peculiarities of these forms is that they offer a certain **mechanism** of analyzing practice and a case (whether it is analysis of counter-transferring of psychoanalytical supervision or analysis of communication a patient - a doctor for a classical Balint group.) And such mechanism is as important as the form of such work (whether it is a group, a study circle o a club[4]).



But for our educational seminars one more thing is very significant. All institutions of upgrading qualification of specialists (doctors, therapists, social workers etc) appeared within **already existing practice** that has got its own rules and norms. It means that the following processes take place there: **correspondence analysis** (with technologies, results, program) and **analysis of mistakes** (difficult cases). For our educational seminars the task is more difficult as there is a need for constructing analysis of the technologies of seminars which are not yet worked out. Such construction happens now in different ways. For example intuitively we found out during the work of study circle that positive case study turns out to be very productive as well as singling out reasons and mechanisms that influence the effectiveness of the integrated practice. These thoughts turn us back to the problem of rationalization of the educational seminars that we hold. In this sense the trainers community can take a risk to work out practice of holding and practice of examining (analyzing, supervising) seminars. Is it possible? May be the answer to this question should be discussed during the study circle in future.

To sum up we would like to mention that the given article has more a framing rather then content function: it outlines the work of the study circle and defines future perspectives. We really hope that this study circle has a future which can bring serious results. And of course we hope that this initiative will arouse interest and discussion in the trainers' community.

Literature:

1. Yalom I. "Theory and practice of group psychotherapy" — St. Petersburg, 2000. — p. 570.
2. Balint groups and supervisions in training the specialists working with people: Manual. St.-Petersburg Military Academy of Russia, 1998. — p. 83.
3. Michajlova E. Business-trainer: from a teacher in a drug store to a coach http://igisp.ru/ptc/articles/Coach_Mikhailova.shtml

[3] According to the Balint the technology which was worked out can be regarded as an active form of learning and improving doctors competence in the sphere of communication "doctor-patient". In its classical sense supervision is one of the methods of practical upgrading qualification in the sphere of psychotherapy. Supervision is the feedback of a qualified specialist — psychotherapist. (More detailed information one can get in 2).

[4] Clubs as a form of work gains more popularity among business-trainers. And as an example we would like to mention the club of consultants and trainers (St-Petersburg), TM-club (time-management club in Moscow).

International partnership and intercultural interaction

interaction in the activity of public organizations

(by experience in seminars for Belarusian NGOs)

Sergej Laboda, Daria Azarko



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Daria Azarko, Board member of the Public Union "Education Center «POST»", trainer, coordinator of international programmes. She is experienced in conducting educational programmes for youth and teenagers on different subjects. She is one of the authors of the book "Zivilcourage, or why indifference kills".

During the past two years we have participated in development and holding of a number of seminars for Belarusian NGOs, which subjects were dedicated to international partnership and intercultural interaction. In this article we would like to summarize and analyze the experience gained and to attract the readers' attention to importance of relationship between "content and form" of such educational events. We think that to a great degree their success is determined exactly by happy combination of these two components.

Representatives of public organization of different kind (women, educational, social, cultural, sanatory rehabilitation, sport, etc.), that had different experienced in international partnership. Therefore we count on interactive interaction between participants which could encourage them to show their initiatives – when everyone working for everyone works for himself/herself. In the context of methodology the attention is paid to different forms and methods of group work. It is particularly efficient in mini-groups, as a rule the majority of the students who responded to our questionnaire noticed this.

There are two subject areas in the programmes of our seminars tightly connected to one another: international partnership and intercultural interaction (**see Annex 1**). The emphases were placed in such a way that to make the participants examine the content through the perspective of their own experience on the one hand, and on the other hand – through practicing real situations and attitudes to other people's experience.

Already at the first stage of the seminar it is important "to build a bridge" to the subject field of the seminar. Using the method "**The Time Line**" (another method title is "**My story**")[1] the first experience of international partnership and intercultural interaction is made actual: its meaning and effects, both at the personal and organizational levels. Then using the method "**The Partnership Cartography**" (work in small groups according to a given scheme – **see table 1**) one of the key questions about motivation is discussed: what do public organizations need international cooperation for? Work in mini-groups is organized in four sectors: "**We want**", "**They want**" (partners are meant), "**We can give**", "**They can give**".

Table 1. Partnership cartography

We want	They want
We can give	They can give

* Лабода С., Азарко Д. Межкультурное образование и международное партнерство в деятельности общественных организаций // "Адукатар", №3(6), 2005 – С. 9–15.

[1] The description for this method's variants see:
Velichko V.V., Dergai A.V., Karpievich D.V., Savchik O.M. Intercultural Education at School. Minsk, 2001. – pp. 96–98.
Ideas, Means and Work in the Field of Intercultural Education of Adult and Youth: Study collection / European Youth Campaign Against Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Intolerance "All Equal, All Different". Strasburg: European youth center – p. 242.

While filling-in "The Partnership Cartography" and discussing the gained results the participants came to the conclusion that some our motives are congruent with the partners' motives and it could be a nice key to the mutual understanding. But cooperation and partnership are excluded or impeded when we can not give our partners what they want and get what we need from them. When there is no interlinks between the blocks located diagonally from each other ("We want" — "They can give" and "They want" — "We can give"), partnership is hardly possible. Analyzing organizations' needs and possibilities in each specific case it is possible to say if cooperation between these organizations is possible in general.

The seminar results' based scheme

We want	They want
• Gaining experience (both in activity and in the field of NGOs' management) • Creation of positive image and strengthening of organization's influence, advertising • To have common information space and informational campaign • International interactions while solving global problems • Financial support to activity • To set exchange cultures, traditions (travels), etc.	• International interactions while solving global problems • General information space • Joint conscientious work • Reliable partner • To invest means in a benefit perspective • To promote democratization, development of active civil consciousness • To raise social level to interact on equal terms
We can give	**They can give**
• Our experience and ideas • Space for self-realization • Active cooperation • Creativity • Human resources, etc.	• Financial and technical support • A network of contacts at international level • To promote organization and its projects • To promote education • Ideas and technologies of programmes (for example, educational), etc.

Having determined what public organizations need international partnership for, we come up to the next information block: in what way it is possible to build international cooperation, what competences are needed, how to set communication correctly, what problems are arisen often and how it is possible to solve them. To deal with these questions we use the **"Case-study"** technique[2]. We started with the "cases" that describe problem or even negative situations in practices of international cooperation (we splitted the group into three sub-groups and each studied its own case). Three situations were interesting and described reality. There is one as a sample (**see next page**)

Work in mini-groups and follow-up situation analysis could be so well-grounded and significant for participants that this block would require more time that it had been envisaged before. It is important that the participants could themselves define those negative moments that do not promote international cooperation and come to relevant conclusions.

Then on the contrast "**from negative to positive**" we offer to read a text about history of successful cooperation. The text was read individually using "**filters**"[3] and then discussed by everybody according to an algorithm specified by them. The result of the first day can be in an aggregated list of recommendations, worked out on a common circle — what to do to ensure successful partnership and what should be avoided.

[2] For detailed information on main principals of the technique application see: Marina Malinina. Case-study technique in informal education. Aducatar, #2/2004 — pp. 2–8.

[3] The description of this method's variants can be also found in the following sources:

Professional Secrets of a Trainer (from experience within non-formal education in the third sector) / executive editor Elena Karpievich, Vladislav Velichko. Sankt-Peterburg, 2003. — p. 233.

D. Kretu Motivation of Schoolchildren at the Lesson / Peremena, vol.4, #2. — p. 23.

Sample

The representatives of the youth initiatives from Vitebsk (M) applied to a German public organization (N) dealing with international youth exchanges between CIS countries with an offer to cooperate. In their message they pointed out that purposeful and active young people – students of the departments of creative arts in the Vitebsk colleges belong to the group, they are eager to receive a group of German young people and schedule their stay in Vitebsk. The message was optimistic and won the recipient's favor, therefore members of the German organization started Internet communication with the Belarusian students.

Being very experienced in implementation of such programmes the German organization decided to secure itself and sent two representatives on a mission to Vitebsk to meet possible partners on the spot and discuss the details of the future exchange. A respective e-mail was sent to the leader of Belarusian group (it is needed to be mentioned that correspondence was done only with him, his e-mails he signed as Nikolai). Nikolai replied that it was a good idea and then the terms of arrival of the German partners were coordinated. As the student group did not have legal position of public organization and could not send official invitation to the German partners they decided to issue tourism visas. They came to agreement that Nikolai would meet them at the Vitebsk railway station holding a nameboard with the German organization name.

One of the first oddities started in Minsk, where the Germans should change train to Vitebsk. An attempt to talk to Nikolai failed, as they were answered they had dialed a wrong number (Nikolai gave it the day before). The Germans made their mind to proceed hoping that technical misunderstanding happened. Information on the train and arrival date was given to Nikolai in advance.

When the Germans arrived to Vitebsk and came out of the train they saw neither nameboard, no Nikolai. Having spent half an hour at the platform they went to a local hotel and left Vuitebsk next day.

On coming back to Germany they found an e-mail from Nikolai, he apologized and explained that he had not managed to meet them. Ingenuousness of such explanation caused regrettable smile and disappointment.

The situation analysis questions:

1. Is there a problem? What is it?
2. What are reasons for this problem?
3. Is there a positive side? What is it?
4. What could facilitate problem-solving?

Some conclusions the seminar's participants came to

What is needed to be done?	What should be avoided?
• to make each other interested • to speak (or be eager to speak) partner's language • to study traditions, culture of partner's country • be honest in partnership (+ frankness) • to define goals and objectives of partnership (own interests, partner's interests) • To keep the word, be responsible • to be initiative • to keep on regular communication • to have the complete information about partner, his/her cooperation priorities • to create a team on international cooperation in the organization and to ensure its mobility	• Breach of human (moral) norms • Top-heavy requirements and expectations • Consumer attitude • Mixture of personal and professional attitudes • The “driven” position

It should be also noted that at key stages of work we make definite steps to summarize and formulate conclusions-recommendations. With this purpose the additional theoretical materials are used at the seminar, they are brought together into “covering package” and designed for teach-yourself, they are followed-up by brief comments. They can be systemized and brought together according to the “**portfolio**” principle: the seminar participants are given the file folders with questions, schemes, theme articles and other kinds of additional materials inside. There is also space to make notes, remarks and drafts of valuable thoughts (own or others), etc. With the help of “**portfolio**” a participant can fix self-standing and monitor own content development at the seminar[4].

[4] See more detailed information about “portfolio”: Professional Secrets of a Trainer (from experience within non-formal education in the third sector) / executive editor Elena Karpievich, Vladislav Velichko. Sankt-Peterburg, 2003. – pp. 51–52.

At the second day the important role is given to a block for working with experts in the programme. The questions to the experts within the frames of the announced subject - **"Existing conditions and perspectives for development of international partnership of Belarusian public organizations"** – treat a problem of the third sector activity mainly via international partnership issue. To our mind this block is highly demanded by participants. As a rule Belarusian specialists greatly experienced in international cooperation were experts, and we also invited representatives of foreign organizations who viewed their opinions on possibilities and perspectives of cooperation with the Belarusian NGOs. International character of the expert group helps to increase, makes deeper and more precise the seminar content on many practical issues.

We worked over intercultural interaction again with the help of the "Case-study" technique but in simplified way and less serious situations were selected[5]. In spite of some curiosity of the observed cases they could stir up the participants' experience and brought them to a number of important conclusions, we used t**he Model of development of intercultural sensitivity** on Milton J. Bennett[6].

Milton J. Bennett considers intercultural understanding as individual process and divided this continuum at the level of personal development in identification and acceptance of differences of cultural differences. Development of intercultural sensitivity means development of ability to identify and accept differences in perception of cultures in the world. It passes through the following stages from ethnocentralism to ethnorelativism:

Ethnocentralism — Ethnorelativism

1	2	3	4	5	6
Denial	Defense	Minimization	Acceptance	Adaptation	Integration

Denial – complete denial of other kinds of human being.

Example: *black slaves were treated not as humans.*

Defense – others are recognized, but with a strong enmity and negative feelings against them. The differences are considered to be a danger for their own group. The negative aims and prejudice to other groups take place.

Example: *prejudices to the Jews in the second world war.*

Minimization – others are allowed with account of minimizing differences between groups.

Example: *"We all are God's children". The problem is that it means "All people are the same as I am", in reality it sounds – "We all are children of God but* ***my*** *God".*

Acceptance – acceptance of others via respecting differences in behavior and values.

Example: *bilingual schools.*

Adaptation – complete respect and adaptation to a human behavior, specified by cultural context.

Example: *parallel using of churches by religious ceremonies of representatives of different religious: Hinduism and Buddhism.*

Integration – absorption and integration of some aspects in behavior and values of others into the culture but support to own culture.

Example: *integration of words, phrases from other culture, some peculiarities in clothes or meals, etc.*

[5] Cases source: Kalachjov I.I. The Youth and Polycultural Education at Colleges in Belarus. Minsk, 2003. – p. 160.
[6] The site information www.salto-youth.net

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This model can be extrapolated onto the scheme **"Steps of intercultural education"** on Groschen/Leenen (**see Appendix 2**). If time allows it is possible to conduct interactive simulation game **"Culture of three colors"** to improve this block.

The numerous researches of cultures' interactions testify that content and results of various intercultural contacts significantly depend on participants' ability to understand each other and come to agreement which is mainly defined by ethnical culture of each interacting side, the folk's psychology, values spread in this or that culture. In cultural anthropology these interactions between different cultures got a name "intercultural communication", which means exchange between two or more cultures and their activity's products carried out in different forms. This exchange can be done both in politics and in personal communication in households, family, informal contacts[7].

To come to content concluding of the second day of the seminar we used the technique **"Silent discussion"**[8]. The participants were offered to define barriers and possibilities in development of international cooperation of the Belarusian public organizations. In fact the discussion came beyond the frames of "silent one", as it happened exactly at the level of comments and attitudes to results gained – two posters, which catalyzed content and sometimes emotional discussion already at common circle.

Some results of the seminar participants

Silent discussion

There are following BARRIERS in setting international partnership for the Belarusian NGO:

- No foreign language
- Lack of finance and inability to find ways how to get it
- No information on contact opportunities
- No cooperation between the Belarusian NGOs
- Isolation of an NGO on "itself" and unwillingness to work "in pairs"
- No real acting system of NGOs' coordination in the country. We need such a system now. We are isolated and we need to learn to unite.
- Project literacy
- What do you mean?
- First of all, a lack of skills to write application was meant.
- When there is an idea, which is needed to be presented in a project to implement it and inability to plan future actions clearly. As a result, it is needed to write project correctly.
- Lack of ability to use means, knowledge, partnership relations while working over the project.
- Lack of experience to build and develop partnership (low juridical, communicative competence).
- Differences in the world view and perception (sometimes in accordance with historical development of the country)
- Consumer attitude to a partner ("give me everything ready").

There are following POSSIBILITIES in setting international partnership for Belarusian NGOs:

- Free working space for activity, project implementation.
- Social groups at which this or that project is aimed, wide masses and population groups to which it is needed or useful
- Wish to work.
- Methodical literature presents.
- Possibility to verify life, to raise cultural level.
- Possibility to launch cheaper and efficient, perspective techniques and programmes into practice. Possibility to apply to colleagues presenting here.
- Possibility to be introduced to new culture, new views on surrounding reality.
- High professionalism of NGOs' members, ability to work qualitatively.
- Plenty of nice ideas and efficient projects which could work efficiently being financed.
- Nice people, their readiness to work with foreign partners.

[7] Grushevitskaya T.G., Popkov V.D., Sadohin A.P. Principals of Intercultural Communication: Manual for Colleges Moscow, 2002. – p. 352.
[8] See variant of this technique:
Velichko V.V, Dergai A.V., Karpievich D.V., Savchik O.M. Intercultural Education at School Minsk, 2001. – pp. 98–99.

In conclusion we would like to notice some important conclusions from our point of view:

- the presented seminars' subject is of current importance, as aspects of international partnership and intercultural interaction are important for the Belarusian public organizations both for those which have relevant experience and those which have just started to develop it;
- the diversity of participants is not a problem if the seminar programme is drafted efficiently, it is contrary can be the main means for achieving the goals;
- it is necessary to use such approaches to the seminar work which would stimulate participants to show own initiatives (work in mini-groups, “case-study” technology, structured discussion);
- engaging experts can enlarge and make deeper content field of the seminar;
- “covering package” is efficient tool (for example, as a “portfolio”), they could be worked both at the seminar and individually.

We permitted ourselves to confirm that the proposed subject is on demand and for near-term outlook proposal of educational programmes of similar content will be asked not by the Belarusian sector of NGOs but by any other organizations interested in international partnership and intercultural interaction.

Appendix 1

The seminar programme

1st day	**Content**
9.15–9.30	Registration of participants .
9.30–12.45 (11.00–11.15 coffee-break)	Programme presentation and agreement of seminar and work schedule. Acquaintance. The first experience in the international partnership and intercultural interactions (personal and organizational): meaning and followings. Presentation of participants’ expectations. International partnership: • Motivation: what do the Belarusian organizations need international cooperation for?
12.45–14.15	**Lunch**
14.15–17.30 (15.45–16.00 coffee-break)	How to build international cooperation efficiently: • necessary competences; • problems and ways of solving; • efficient communication. Concluding of the day programme.
2nd day	**Content**
9.00–12.15 (10.30–10.45 coffee-break)	Existing conditions and perspectives for development of international partnership of Belarusian public organizations: questions to experts. Intercultural interactions: responsiveness of differences, national peculiarities and specifics.
12.45–13.15	**Lunch**
13.45–17.00 (15.15–15.30 coffee-break)	Development of international cooperation of Belarusian public organizations: barriers and opportunities. Concluding of the seminar.

Appendix 2



Steps of intercultural education (on Groschen/Leenen)

1 Acceptance of own culture

↓

2 Understanding of the fact that other cultural models, not condemning them

↓

3 Deeper understanding of own culture

↓

4 Enlargement of cultural horizons (increasing of a number of criteria for identification of other cultures)

↓

5 Development of understanding and respect of oddities of other cultures. Breaking of stereotypes

↓

6 Increasing of own cultural alternatives:
- ability to be flexible to cultural rules
- ability to be guided by mind in situations of cultural choice

↓

7 Setting of constructive and satisfactory interactions in other cultural surroundings if you are ability to cope with real intercultural conflicts and perceive other cultural standards







■

“School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Studies”:
remarks on experience of advance training of young historians

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After the collapse of the USSR Belarusian historical scholarship as well as that of the post-soviet republics faced a number of various scientific and methodological problems. Historiography still used Marxist methodology that had become outdated long ago and did not let to solve majority of scientific issues. Since then it was the only correct approach to historical science and it did not allow new trends to take roots in Belarusian historiography. Restrictions and prohibitions also affected a choice of research subjects. Study of Belarusian history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (here and after referred to as the GDL) period was not approved as it collided with ideological concept of “Moscow as the only one legitimate unifier of Slavic lands”. Historians of the Middle Ages were allowed to research only socio-economic subjects mainly dealing with the history of peasantry. The researches were to prove “exploitation and oppression of Belarusian peasants by Lithuanian feudal lords.” After 1991 there was a true raise of interest to historical studies of the GDL in Belarus. For example, studies of Mikola Ermalovich made us see history of Belarus and its statehood differently. Contemporary Belarusian scholarship made a true boost compared to the Soviet period, subjects on political, cultural, religious and social history of the GDL started to be studied in wider scale. However, methodological problems remained unsolved in many respects, despite the fact that Doctoral Studies Programs were to make a focus on particularly this aspect. This problem is added by a break of ties between the scholars from the neighboring countries and a lack of information on scholarly achievements abroad. Such a situation unfortunately did not encourage professional development of young historians.

A lack of succession in professional historians training, few opportunities for advance training and getting information on contemporary research methods and tools became a reason why the Grodna Public Association of Young Intellectuals “VIT” launched a long-term scholarly program “Study of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania”. Siarhei Salei, Natallia Slizh and Siarhei Kaun[1] were responsible for the program coordination.

The first step of the program was implementation of the project “School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Studies” which was aimed at advanced training of young researchers of the GDL in terms of content, methodology, as well as research and teaching methods and tools at the levels of **knowledge**, **comprehension**, and **application**, due to classification of educational goals given by B. Bloom (1956).

Project description

Doctoral students, PhDs, as well as last-year university students from Polotsk, Minsk and Grodno participated in the project “School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Studies”, totally 24 people. It should be noticed that Public Association “VIT” is experienced in implementation of scholarly projects, but it was a debut in history field which was rather successful and became much publicized event in the country.

“School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Studies” supposed conduction of a set of seminars on key courses: source study, research methods and tools, computing for historians, and interactive teaching methods. These subjects were selected purposely since each historian should start his/her scholarly career with majoring them. However, young historians are not trained in Belarusian universities so that they gain practical research skills; they rather receive general theoretical background related to their fields of study. And this is insufficient for conducting research in specific historical topic. Besides that, a training system at the universities is rather conservative and narrow for new trends in research and teaching methodology. Thus, students do not always

* Сліж Н., Салей С. “Школа вывучэння Вялікага княства Літоўскага”: з досведу павышэння кваліфікацыі маладых гісторыкаў // “Адукатар”, №1(4), 2005 – С. 14–16.

[1] Siarhei Kaun is a senior lecturer at the Belarusian State University, researches social and economic history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania in the sixteenth-seventeenth centuries, majors in corresponding research methods and tools.

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have an opportunity to get introduced to peculiarities of contemporary historical science development. Study of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania requires a historian have solid background. He/she must at least read and understand Belarusian, Polish, Ukrainian, Russian, Latin, Old Belarusian, Old Polish, Lithuanian, English and German languages, know sources' specifics, peculiarities of the epoch, etc. It is very difficult to train such a specialist. Many Belarusian scholars improve their knowledge individually in order to become proficient in the chosen field of study. Therefore, actuality and necessity of gaining proper basic competences for young Belarusian historians appeared obvious.

Four seminars were conducted within the framework of the project, including "Sources on the GDL History", "Research Methods and Tools", "Computing for Historians", and "Innovative Teaching Methods and Tools". They were conducted during the academic year 2001–2002, once in two months. Each seminar lasted three days and schedule was pretty busy: workday started at 9 am and ended at 7 pm. All sessions were structured according to the following scheme: the first part was a lecture presenting an issue in question followed by a discussion, and another part was a practical training in application of concepts presented. Before the beginning of each seminar the project participants received its draft agenda describing the main subject of the seminar, so that they had an opportunity to prepare brief presentations of their own achievements on the issues to be discussed.

The leading international and Belarusian specialists were invited to contribute at the seminars: Janos Bak (Hungary), Gerhard Jaritz (Austria), Heorhi Halenchanka, Ales Krautsevich, Ales Hrusha, Halina Dzerbina, Valiantsin Holubev, Henadz Semainchuk, Aliaksandr Nechuhryn, Dzmitryi Yatskevich, Mikhail Vaitovich, Dzmitryi Karpievich, Alena Karpievich, Dzmitryi Hubarevich, Siarhei Kaun, Siarhei Salei, and Natallia Slizh.

As it was mentioned above, each seminar was devoted to a specific subject. General classification of sources and classification of the sources on GDL history were considered at the First Seminar. In spite there are handbooks and articles published, this subject currently is not completely worked out and therefore did not loose its actuality, as each researcher should place a chapter into his/her thesis where he/she should present and analyze the sources for the subject used. That is why methods and tools of source study and interpretation were presented and discussed at the sessions. Information got let the audience to improve their preliminary achievements on source study basis of their researches.

Many Belarusian historians notice that the weakest point of all Doctoral dissertations is research methods and tools used. It often happens that researchers are not aware of latest achievements and trends in application of research method and tools in international scholarship and can suggest nothing but traditional research techniques in their field, and this in its turn narrows researcher's opportunities to interpret sources and therefore non-trivial conclusions can be rarely found in such researches. Thus, Second Seminar was dedicated to exactly this issue. Both traditional and innovative methods of historical research were studied there, including but not limited to semiotics, hermeneutics, gender theory, retrospective method, and others.

The Third Seminar was aimed at introduction of new trends in Computing for Historians. Personal computer became an integrated working tool of any historian nowadays. It can be used not just for Word processing but for statistical analysis of sources, projecting diagrams and maps, and for development of historical databases. This approach could be utilized in the majority of historical researches, which was confirmed by presentations prepared by the project participants.

Due to the fact that majority of Belarusian historians are not just scholars, but also teach at the University level, the Forth Seminar was focused over innovative teaching methodology. At this seminar participants through their personal experience got to know how it is possible to teach history interestingly using active teaching methods.

The main methods applied at the first three seminars were problematic lecture followed by discussion, presentation of research projects, and general discussion. The forth seminar was interactive both in content and in methods applied: via direct participation trainees were introduced to the methods of interactive game, role play, case study, interrupted lecture, etc.

An integrated part of each seminar was specific session on getting feedback from the participants and on planning of usage of knowledge and skills gained at the seminar in their scholarly and teaching activities; at the same time participants discussed their joint activities on dissemination and usage of information received. It should be noticed that the majority of participants showed themselves open to new knowledge and motivated for change; and all that facilitated efficient communication among project participants both at implementation stage and after it was completed.

Materials and results of project were collected and prepared for publication in two editions: **The Grand Duchy of Lithuania: Research Methods and Tools and The Grand Duchy of Lithuania: Historiography and Sources**. The first edition has been already published. It includes articles both on traditional historical research methodology and on innovative methods and tools widely used internationally. The peculiarity of this edition is that it illustrates how to apply certain research tools for analysis of the GDL sources. This information can be useful for both beginners and experienced historians. The publication gives an opportunity to get acquainted with the materials of the "School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Studies" for those who were not able to participate in its sessions.

Project evaluation

To analyze the influence the project "School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Studies" on scholarly community the organizers envisaged a multilevel system for efficiency follow-up. The project evaluation was based on the model proposed by D. Kirkpatrick (1959, 1996) and was applied at the levels of (1) **reaction**, or immediate feedback of the audience on each session, (2) **learning**, or follow-up of the changes that happened to participants' knowledge at each seminar, (3) **behavior**, or analysis of how participants used acquired knowledge and skills in their everyday practice, and (4) **results**, or follow-up of in what degree the project results effected general level of Belarusian historical science and, particularly, establishments that participants represented.

In practical terms it happened in the following way:

(1) Both after every session and during special reflection sessions at the end of each seminar free exchange of opinion took place regarding what content participants liked best of all and what they did not like, or whether offered information

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and methods can be used in practice or not. At the end of each seminar participants were questioned, that gave an organizers an opportunity to get to know how young scholars **reacted** to its content and find out the ways of improvement of further seminars. Majority of participants noticed in their questionnaires that seminars were very useful for them, participants felt satisfied with their work, communication, content and teaching methods used at the seminars.

(2) A specific questionnaire was developed by the organizers to evaluate what participants **learned** from the seminars. The audience mentioned exact pieces of knowledge and skills gained, which they were going to apply in their teaching and/or research. The average mark to evaluate usefulness of the topics presented was 1,8 points at 2-mark scale. This witnesses that almost all chosen topics were demanded by the target group. The results of the seminar on innovative teaching methodology turned to be the most contradictory that can be explained by suspicious participants' attitude towards possibility to change their own role of an “expert in content” in teaching process.

(3) After completion of the project “School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Studies” communications with the participants kept on. First of all, the project organizers interacted with the participants of the seminars and their supervisors, tracked scholarly achievements of the participants and application of knowledge and skills gained in frames of the project, i.e. changes in their **behavior** in practice (publications, presentations at conferences, etc.). One year and a half after the project has been completed, the Grodna Public Association of Young Intellectuals “VIT” with support of IREX organized a specific workshop “Application of Contemporary Research Methods and Tools in History” (7–9.11.2003), at which almost all participants of the project had an opportunity to present results of their researches achieved with support of the knowledge and skills gained at the “School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Studies”.

(4) Three years which passed after completion of the project “School of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania Studies” is enough to evaluate the **results** of the project efficiency. It is obvious that former participants of the School became the “change leaders” in their research and educational institutions. They influence subjects and methodology of researches conducted in their institutions, disseminate acquired knowledge among their colleagues, implement joint innovative scholarly projects. We can speak now about creation of a true community of young Belarusian GDL scholars and a role of the project and its participants in it is undoubted.

Experience and perspectives

As practice shows not just state research and educational institutions can participate in training of young historians but also public associations. This is not a unique Belarusian experience of conducting schools for historians: various scientific associations, centers, foundations, organizations conduct them abroad. However, the project described the first event of such type that took place in Belarus. It was conducted by local historians supported by the department of Medieval Studies of the Central European University (Hungary). Thanks to the world-known historians Prof. Janos Bak and Prof. Gerhard Jaritz the audience was introduced to the latest trends in history teaching and research. Their presentations were supported by reference books, manuals, CDs disseminated among the participants. The project facilitated the transfer of scholarly knowledge and skills from the leading Belarusian and international historians, who presented practical results of their latest researches. Project participants got an opportunity for individual consultations and presentation of preliminary results of their researches. Besides that, the project facilitated establishment and strengthening of contacts between young historians and between historians of different generations as well.

Mentioned above does not mean that we should deny traditional historical education. It gives basic professional education and diploma (certificate) officially recognizing profession got. Significant lack in traditional educational system is that it rather conservative and not so quick in acquisition of new ideas and trends in the field of teaching and research. In this sense public associations are more flexible and quicker in adjusting to the innovations. Their training programs and projects must be competitive and must differ from what is offered by the universities. But this does not mean that such educational projects of public associations must be isolated from academies. Exactly cooperation between institutions of formal and informal education with a chance to transmit experience gained seems to be the most perspective. And educational programs of public associations being more flexible can be a specific “pilot site” for innovative methods and tools, which later on can be adapted by traditional educational institutions.

It is also important to choose a subject on which additional education is needed and project activity is possible. The History of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania was chosen purposely. Analysis of Belarusian historiography shows that this direction is weakly developed in historical scholarship and, consequently, it is rather perspective in respect of development and training of specialists. Belarusian scholarship significantly lags behind European one in researching of this period in the history of the region. Thus, there is a need to study experience of the world historical scholarship and try to conduct researches on a proper level to incorporate them into the world historiography. A necessary condition for successful implementation of a project idea is a proper professional training of organizers, their skills in the chosen field and surely a target group to which the event is urgent and useful. Taking into account current situation in historical scholarship, with a purpose to support its development, participation of the 'third sector' organizations in informal training and popularization of historical heritage is becoming more and more necessary.

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Review of the book “Professional Secrets of a Trainer”



(from experience within non-formal education in the third sector)*

Svetlana Matskevich

Svetlana Matskevich, candidate of pedagogical science, working for a doctor's degree in Belarussian State University.

I was waiting for the book about professional skills of a trainer with a certain interest and impatience as I was expecting some pedagogical texts of good quality. As an expert I took part in one seminar within the project area of “School for trainers” which resulted in writing this book. That is why I was interested in the results of my work and also how it is possible to later negotiate the introspective work of an expert and how they function in the third sector of Belarus.

Having defined myself intellectually in one of the most serious of directions — system-thinking-activity (STA) methodology, both in life and in a professional sphere, I adhere to the active position regarding realization of this direction through cultural policy. It resulted in my specializing in the sphere of education. It is natural that the objects of realization for STA methodology must be within this direction. That is why the work is being carried out regarding the whole system of education in Belarus. Such objects are composite, substantial and dynamic. In doing research, carrying out expertise and programming, the education reform methodologist regards both formal and non-formal education. There is an important task of finding existing sources of development in the system and looking for new ones. That is why the process of interaction and exchange of ideas is very interesting as well as products and results of activity among various institutions in educational sphere.

The book “Professional Secrets of a Trainer” at first glance is solely addressed to the specialists from the third sector in Belarus. The authors make an assumption that this text may be used by other specialists in the educational sphere. But let's think what and how can be transferred through the text of such kind? Why it was written at all? There aren't a lot of good books in the third sector. I will even say that a reader is tired of waiting for a good book. In the beginning of 1990s we read everything new which was “not soviet” with delight and then we started to write ourselves. Finally in a formal way, the demand is met. And now there is a question about quality. It means there should be set certain criteria at a certain level. If we set high criteria then may be we get a quality product.

Let's take a look at this intellectual product within the context of some activity. The text can have several effects: 1) to reproduce and open some content, idea; 2) with the help of the content change in the future the activity of a reader or the author. If there is a task to write an effective text then it must be appropriate and relevant at the present moment in time. It means the readers should wait for it. A reader doesn't wait for a text which represents a report, compellation or interpretation about something that a reader already knows. But a reader is waiting for a text which can help in solving relevant tasks for a reader in his intellectual and practical activity. A text for the sake of text is an example of yesterday's postmodern. Intellectual Belarus which wasted too much time on this. hoping to fit the European elite. It didn't' work. At the moment when it was necessary to arrange

* Мацкевич С. Рецензия на книгу “Профессиональная кухня тренера” (из опыта неформального образования в третьем секторе) // “Адукатар”, №2, 2004 — С. 44–46.

frame communication and quickly solve complicated practical tasks, the intellectuals just got absorbed in talking and lost the time.

So can we consider this text as an exception? What is the reader waiting for right now? The authors don't intend to appeal to a wide range of readers, only trainers and may be state educational sphere employees. Are there many trainers in Belarus? And how many of them are needed? Alas there aren't many; they can all be counted. Is there a need to widen this circle? What for? There are enough people. In business structures, trainers mainly use perfected foreign methods. And in the third sector may be there is no need for higher qualifications in trainers? And there is so much information written about training. It is impossible to count all of the books. Not interesting! A book about educational experience is only relevant when there is a task to influence another sphere of activity. And not in a "may be" way but directly. It means there should be enough courage to compete with other specialists in this sphere to change the situation in general and not somewhere in Sweden but here, in Belarus. And why not to try to do something with the whole Belarusian pedagogic? Or you are not strong enough? To tell you the truth, you are a bit late.

The text mainly represents not the trainer's experience but the intellectual introspection of pedagogic (though very specific trainer's) activity. And this can be interesting. For me, the description of the whole trainers work and the technique is not important though the authors tried to describe it in detail both in the main text and in the appendix. The main indicator of this text is introspective work of the team of authors. And it is not about the experience of others but their own. The authors don't speak directly about introspection as some methodologists do but they do the introspection and shape it in the text. So this is a good example to be followed by the other "teachers".

The analysis of problems and tasks of democratization in society is well made though in my opinion, too well made. You should be more courageous when speaking about democratization in Belarus. The next thing that catches the eye is "modesty" of announcing the problems and correspondingly the topics covered in the book. But it is only at first glance. The authors consider the problems that seem to have been discussed many times, i.e. the effectiveness of work, about work with a text and seminar programs... But they write about it in a very interesting way.

The question "Who is a trainer?" is quite introspective in itself and requires not practical and simple discussion about the benefits of the trainer's work, but theoretical and framed discussion which comes from trainer's self-determination. Please show me your own criteria! But the author of this chapter chooses a standard way of referring to international standards in trainings. It is also a way out. But we would like so much to see the attempts of modeling the trainer's activity. Then the basis could be not only referring to other trainers experience but the whole theory of modeling specialists activity.

I have to admit that I don't like the position of the trainer which is based on "participant-centered" approach in the way it is described in the text. The participant-centered approach is secondary in the way it is described in the text. If a trainer wants to help, lead and be interesting for somebody, a trainer should be interesting for his/herself and answer their own question "Who are you?" i.e. to become a subject. Without such self-introspection the participant-centered strategy is not effective. Subjectivity doesn't appear itself. It appears as a result of self-definition of a person towards future activity, through correlation of personal opportunities and wishes with objective requirements for the activity.

Speaking about working out the program of a seminar and defining the trainer's aims, it seems to me that the authors consider the problem which is external towards the program itself and its aims and takes us away from discussing the typology of seminar aims and programs. I believe that it is not necessary to follow the program exactly and follow the aims and tasks that were put before because during the seminar there should be introspection of the situation "here and now" and whether is necessary to refuse the previously chosen program. In this flexibility and dynamics lies the skill of being a trainer. The program itself is of no value. But the decision to refuse from the program of the seminar is not a simple one. It should be mentioned that the participants can not and sometimes should not know the aim of a seminar. There is a danger in following participants' tastes and not reach anything. Quality is better than quantity!.

In this chapter of the book, the emphasis in on the educational program being applied in a participant-centered approach and a certain technique is offered. But there is no answer to what is the most important thing for a trainer when producing a seminar program. The authors moved on further, placing emphasis on the methods and techniques. But all of these proposals have to have some basis. And such a basis (methodologists call it the "frame") is the activity's task. Any seminar or game is an imitation of some main activity which is being taught. And the task of the seminar should not be educating or imitating but, activity. The problem with the trainer's work is that a trainer should keep separate both types of tasks: that of the activity that should be taught and that of the learning task. But it is not necessary to open for the participants learning tasks, this is trainer's secrets and the more invisible it is the better, because then the participants will not get lost in frames and problems. Learning methods, the aims of forming and "growing" →

some knowledge and skills should be allied to the main activity process which is being taught. It is necessary to understand the reasons why the skills are being taught. It is natural that there are laws and algorithms of the main activity development. That is why if something is not clear for the participants, it shouldn't be neglected for the sake of the program and time limits. Discussing the program makes sense if the participants on it help by starting to realize what is necessary to be done and don't discuss how the topics should be formulated i.e. they define the zone of close activity and make the frames for this activity. From my own experience I know that setting up the frames is the most difficult and time-consuming.

So the most important thing is keeping the frames of the activity. A trainer only accompanies a participant along this way. That is why the question of time is very important. One shouldn't set big tasks if there is no time for it. Education technology is a factor of fulfilled space and time — this is just the means of fulfilling aims and tasks. And naturally, aims and tasks should be correlated with technologies. But then the problem of time should be considered depending on the difficulty of the tasks. The laws of activity technology are formulated as the laws of correspondence and negotiation. And the main criteria of technology effectiveness is fulfilling the work within a unit of time. (E = W/T). Effectiveness is higher if one and the same work is fulfilled within a shorter period of time. But there are certain limits for corresponding tasks. For example, it is impossible to do research within a day — one should spend a year on it. Of course one can try but the quality will be different. The author of the chapter "about a lack of time" refers to this problem, not to frames and tasks but rather makes introspection about the number of conditions and factors and considers the problem not theoretically but practically. This has certain advantages. The author raises the level of introspection from certain difficulties to thoughts about it. And even leads the introspection to certain recommendations not claiming to embrace everything.

Even more interesting is the chapter about work with a text. In my opinion, the authors raised a very interesting problem — why should one read the texts written by others and what happens as a result of such reading? It is well known that everybody can read. Though experience shows that reading is not an easy process. Does a reader understand the meaning? What is more important for him and what is less? Can he or she understand the authors' position and apply it to their own? A text is means of activity. And if misused, it loses its effectiveness. The authors of the reviewed book based on Blume's scheme are really worried about the necessity to achieve the transmission of the text content and build up a critical attitude to the information. The authors offer a number of interesting techniques and methods of trainers' work i.e. they carry their ideas to a logical, practical conclusion. Though in the text, the activity context of using the texts is not revealed, from which appears the necessity and pragmatics of such skill as reading.

The chapter about the effectiveness of seminar work is a good conclusion for the content part of the book. The authors highlight a number of important criteria: the need for feedback and the level of the reaction of seminar participants, the level of learning, behavioral levels, orientation in practical aspects and the effectiveness of a seminar. There are not so many discussions about the content of the criteria but those offered are quite applicable and appropriated methods of work with reference to the Kirkpatrick model. This is a good benefit of the book. Applied character and introspection are the main principles that the authors successfully try to follow. These methods can be used by other trainers and teachers who practice active learning methods. The main task is fulfilled — the introspection of the trainer's practice. And it is good. The authors of the text are not responsible for what happens later. It is common knowledge that the text will have a target group. So why can't the author be such a reader? The main thing is to fulfill an activity task. And introspection is quite a worthy and important task for any text.

It would be good to discuss about something higher and with frames. Reading this book made me think about the state of Belarusian educational and intellectual authorities in pedagogic. In Belarus there are a lot of specialists who would like to develop a world culture and complete it with their own material. But how is this possible if their colleagues don't want to recognize this? Recognition is something that doesn't depend on the author; it comes from outside. Degradation of criteria at intellectual level and ability to work at a high level leads to the absence of cultural elite both in Belarusian society in general and pedagogic, in particular. Why Blum and Kirkpatrik? Why not Gusakovsky and Mackevich? More acceptable and simple discussions are more popular than serious theory, explaining it with applied character and emphasis on practice. But, dear colleagues, working with the mind is also a kind of practice and no less important than transmission of methods and techniques.

The problem is that nobody but us can make the elite in pedagogic. And not only should academic circles work on it but NGOs as well and non-formal education. And I hope you agree with me that the main task is not just writing the text about the trainer's work but the task is both cultural and political. One should be brave enough and have certain ambitions to think at such levels, setting up a certain norm of professional and inter-professional communication. So the beginning is not bad and we will see what comes next.

■

Summary

#1, 2004

Ulad Vialichka

Non-formal adult education in Belarusian third sector: the peculiarities of development

See this issue, pages 2–6.

Viktor Chernov

The system of civic education in Belarusian "third sector"

One of the main tasks concerning the development of Belarusian "third sector" in author's opinion is to form gradually constantly functioning multifunctional system of civic education oriented at various social groups. The author offers own vision of such system and models its main levels which could create conditions for uniting the efforts of many organisations and increase the effectiveness of resources usage, offer the progrmas of various levels of complexity and different directions, form and maintain own cadre, assist mass training of active citisens and forming demokratic elite.

Partnership for education

Interview with coordinators of partnership network of NGOs

It has been four years since the partnership of Belarussian NGOs working in the field of non-formal civic education started. The journal "Adukatar" is one of the joint projects in this partnership network. That is why we decided to write about this partnership. We interviewed the coordinators of partnership network "Association for Civic Education" – Vlad Velichko (Public Union "Education Center «POST»") and Tamara Matzkevich (public association "Center «Supolnasc»").

Ludmila Petina

Gender knowledge and civic education

At present stage of development of civic education in Belarus it is crucial that the system of civic education and its components (educational establishments, educational projects and enlightening programs, research centers) are responsible for adjustment of existing hierarchy systems built on gender characteristics and assisted transformation of gender stereotypes. In order to achieve this the elements of gender knowledge in the programs of civic education have to be present in all spheres including politics, economics, public relations, culture and ethics.

Aliona Velichko

Let me introduce Swedish study circle to you

See this issue, pages 23–25.

Sergej Laboda, Dasha Azarko, Aliona Lugovtzova

Games which are played? From the experience of holding methodological seminar-training for students-psychologists

The authors think that at present there is a problem of defining the forms of non-formal education. Very often educational activities which have different grounds are called the same. Sometimes the situation is vice versa – the activities have different names but have the same ground. For example what some people call "training" the others call "seminar" or smth else. And some people consider their educational programs to be seminars and don't really think about giving these educational activities other names. In this article the authors analyze their own experience of short-term educational program. And on its basis they consider the matters of content which are connected with the peculiarities of using the method of interactive game as well as the effectiveness of chosen form of learning defined by the authors as methodological seminar-training.

Tatiana Buiko

About Chech educational reform: private notes

In October 2003 international organization "Man in prison" with the help of civic association "Center Supolnasc" offered the representatives of various Belarusian educational establishments – from state ones to NGOs and even oppositional ones – the opportunity to get acquainted with the Chech educational reform. The information which was obtained during the visit is presented in the article through personal notes of the author and it is used as a basis for comparative express-analysis according to the scheme: the concept of educational reform in Chech Republic, the fulfilment of the reform in Chech Republic – the concept and practice of educational reform in Belarus.

Ileana Boeru, Cristiana Vlad

Lifelong Learning Week – building up the European dimension

Each autumn, at the beginning of November, Romanians are preparing for the celebration of Lifelong Learning Week (Festivalul Sanselor Tale). This is both the occasion when adult education and vocational training providers meet the needs of the beneficiaries and market their offer. Those who seek for a working place or look for a carrier have the opportunity to improve their knowledge and update information on informal and non-formal learning offers. 2003 Lifelong Learning Week had a clear message: adult education is not only a national policy to foster economy, but also an opportunity to build up a personal and professional carrier.

Summary

#2, 2004

Jagor Maroz. Sprouts of democracy at “the field of wonders”

The author of the article considers that adult education shouldn't be carried out through manipulation of the participants' awareness. Educational events with the pedagogic component should take into account ethic requirements. The author believes that short term educational programs which are held today in the third sector have not the right approach to solving educational objective because of their own limits. The “outcome” which was nevertheless worked out by the trainers to fulfill educational objectives became worse that its reason. The third sector from the point of view of civic awareness began to defame the people who are close to it. The majority of trainers who actively manipulate the participants during the seminar make it unintentionally and are not able to reflect on their behavior. And that is why the author puts the question: are the methods of civic education worth using these means?

Piotr Lapo. Libraries and education of adults

As today there is no adult education as a system, the author considers that today we can speak only about indirect interaction of these two social institutes of the society. He says that for ages the main mission of a library has been to assist education and bring up the citizens of a country on the basis of the collected information materials and organizing different ways of access to it. The library helps its users to find the sources of information which correspond their spiritual, cultural, intellectual, educational needs and recommends an issue which indirectly influences formation of their ideology and aesthetic taste.

Victor Chernov. Regional teaching initiatives as a subject of civic education in Belarus

In this article the author describes quite new phenomenon for Belarusian third sector – regional teachers' initiatives. Recently there has been a tendency towards the growth of social activity of Belarusian teachers. This activity is mostly of educational-enlightening type and is revealed first of all in the sphere of culture, ecology, history and civic science. The author considers that the tendency towards development of teachers initiatives can lead in future to creating on their basis national umbrella structure which unites regional teachers' initiatives in the sphere of civic education. Such structure which involves the most qualified teachers of history and social science can become an important element of national system of civic education.

Marina Malinina
Case-study method in non-formal education

Case-study method is usually associated with business education. And it is not surprising. Namely here the method appeared and has been successfully used for a long time. Though lately one can hear (unfortunately mostly hear) about the usage of case-study method in other spheres (sociology, pedagogics, journalism, ecology, civic science etc.) What is the peculiarity of case-study method and its educational potential? What are the opportunities of its usage in non-formal education? This article is devoted to the answers to these and other questions.

“Business education in Belarus at present is formed not by the demand but by the offer”

In the discussions devoted to various aspects of adult education (content, subjects, directions etc.) one can't avoid the sphere of business education. What is business education in Belarus? What main forms and contents does it include? How is the effectiveness of educational services evaluated in this sphere? Is there the system of upgrading qualification in business education? Dmirty Karpievich (the chief editor of “Adukatar”) asks Andrei Gusakovsky the managing partner of consulting company “Key solutions” these and other questions.

Viktoriya Dronova, Oleg Sivograkov, Piotr Lapo, Tatiana Ptashnik, Dmitry Gubarevich
Adult education is the investment in the future

The article may be regarded as an attempt to consider and analyze from different positions – a participant, a trainer and organizer – the seminar “Adult education – the investment in the future” which was prepared by the international team of trainers and held for the representatives of Belarusian state institutions and NGOs who work in the sphere of adult education in November 2003.

Marek Bychkouski. Folk high school – “school of life”

The development of civilization lead to some modifications in the practice of folk high schools (FHS). There are also certain differences in financing FHS in different countries. But the main theoretical background and the majority of the ideas of FHS remain invariable through the whole history. Referring to this, the credo “a person-centered approach” and “mutual influence” of a teacher and a student is the key sense. The author of the article considers that this main idea of FHS pedagogics is still important today.

Tatiana Pashevalova. Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig and his ideal of “general education”

The article introduces Grundtvig in whose works for the first time were presented the ideas of adult education in Denmark. Nikolai Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783-1872) is a Danish philosopher, poet, pedagogue and enlightener, the inspirer of religious and social movement of 19th century for national and cultural renascence of Denmark, the author of folk high school concept. His name stands close to the names of Hans Christian Andersen and Ceren K'erkegor who may be are more famous than he is. But in Denmark they are sure that namely Grundtvig left the brightest trace in Danish culture.

Sergei Vetochin. Belarussian-German conference on the problems of adult education

This article presents the main results of international conference “The system of adult education in European context” which was held in Minsk on February 25-26 2004. According to author's opinion the sphere of adult education is the obligatory component of national educational system of any country and presents itself as the institute of upgrading the knowledge and competence of population who have some basic academic and professional education.

In the conditions of deepening the diversification of opinions, aims and approaches towards organizing and financing, law regulations such institutes gain more significance. Alongside with this there is a development of directions of formal education with quite strict norm regulations, company education with rather utilitarian professional character and non-formal education with its aim to satisfy the educational demands of population including the ones which are not connected with the fulfillment of professional activity.

Svetlana Matskevich. Review on the book “Professional secrets of a trainer”
(from the experience of non-formal education in the third sector)

See this issue, pages 40–42.

EDUCATOR
##1–6, 2004–2005

Summary

#3, 2004

A chance to survive

See this issue, pages 13–19.

Sustainable development of Belarus: strategy up till 2020

Nowadays it is clear that to create sustainable development in one country is impossible – the world is the one and only the joint efforts of all countries may lead to some changes. That is why the strategy plans of sustainable development at national level are given so much attention. In our country the joint project of UN Programme of development (UNDP) and the Republic of Belarus 'Development and Internalization of the National Sustainable Development Strategy' has come to the end. About aims, activities and results of this project we know from the project leader Oleg Sivograkov.

Natalia Riabova. Eco-logic of education

The concept of education for sustainable development was created for reorientation of all spheres of education including ecological one towards the aims of sustainable development. How to fulfill this reorientation? This question disturbs today both pedagogues – experts and authors of educational programs. In the article there is an example of using the program which corresponds to authors opinion to all criteria of education for sustainable development. This is the program 'Ecologik!' which has been carried out by the NGO 'Ecohome'. The program is aimed first of all at the teachers of school and extracurricular establishments and has gained a high popularity among teachers.

Kasya Gancharova. Terra inkognita or citizens employed by state

On the basis of a training 'Aarhus convention: public participation' the author of the article describes the first step of state employees on terra incognita and makes the conclusions out of the results of her practice. First of all she saw state employees as competent, talented and creative professionals but most of them are not professionally fulfilled. This is caused by the lack of corporate culture, mechanisms which could give opportunity to show initiative and creativity. Secondly, the contradiction of the positions of a state employee and a citizen. Or in other words: 'As a citizen I am totally against, but as a state employee I have to follow the orders.' And finally the author considers that there is a vast field for activity: work and training for state employees.

Svetlana Semenas. Deep ecology: short introduction into theory and practice

In the article there is the presentation of the deep ecology concept which is opposed to shallow ecological reformation which according to author's opinion struggles not with the reasons but with the consequences of ecological crisis. From the new scientific understanding of life systems point of view nature should be considered as integrated wholeness but not separate species of living beings who live in a lifeless environment. It is not a hierarchy but the network. A man is not the top of world creation, not the highest value but a mere citizen of the community as he is included in the nature circles and depends on them. Everything in the world is interrelated and a man is just a spider line in the web of life. The methods of training which are worked out by the followers of deep ecology allow participants to feel and realize the unity of all beings and own place in this world.

Natalia Riabova. Permanent culture or you are the designer of your life

Very many people after having acquainted with the concept of sustainable development ask a question: how to put these principles into life? As one of the possible instruments for this the author suggests using the system of permaculture design by Bill Mollison. Permaculture is based on the idea that a human being in his activity can learn from nature and use its laws for his benefit instead of struggling against it.

Galina Verameichyk. Education and regional development: Bavarian accent

In what case education can encourage citizens' understanding of the interdependence among environment, economy and social system? How to provide the students not only with necessary knowledge but also to encourage the awareness and development of a number of new values? How to include in the educational process not only the kids and teenagers but also adults? What forms can help to make the education more true to everyday problems and needs of individuals and members of a community? These and other questions are discussed on the pages of the article through introduction of German system of adult education, taking Bavaria as an example.

Ales' Straltzou. The role of local culture and traditions in sustainable development: Bavarian example

Bringing up of children especially during the first years of their life is closely connected to local culture, traditions and behaviour models. In the majority of cases local culture and traditions offer approaches which correspond to the concept of sustainable development. First of all it concerns the spheres of special development of a person as well as his connection with nature. If to add to it the rational usage of the potential stored during the ages it will lead to economical effect. In this article the author pays your attention to the fact how important can be the support of local culture and traditions within the context of community sustainable development.

Summary

#1(4), 2005

Education and training in the third sector: condition and prospects of development

The article contains materials of the round table, organized by the editors of "Educator". What is the main feature of public organizations' educational activity? Whether nowadays public organizations are subjects of educational activity in Belarus? What directions and forms of training are the most widely distributed in the third sector of Belarus, and how can it be explained? What prospects of education development exist in the third sector? What steps toward these prospects should be taken by organizations? Heads of number of organizations engaged in educational activity searched for answers to these and other questions together.

Viktor Chernov. Some aspects of strategy of civil education development in Belarusian third sector

See this issue, pages 7–12.

Natallia Slizh, Siarhei Saley. The school of study of Lithuanian Grand Duchy: from the experience of professional skill's improvement by young historians

See this issue, pages 37–39.

Irina Strelkova. International Winter School II: interactive methods of training librarians

Nowadays improvement of professional skills of the library staff follows the path of the open process occurring not only in institutions, specially intended for training, and not only under the direction of the professional teachers of these institutions, but also under influence of other persons having a certain experience, knowledge, and skills. Only association of classical library education with innovative forms of professional skill's improvement will assure the best result. The author describes innovative experience in the field of continuous education of the librarians by an example of two International Winter schools – seminars, which were held in 2003 and 2004 with a support of the International European project "Civic Education Project" (CEP, Budapest).

Inna Gubarevich. Preliminary work with the participants of educational events

From the author's standpoint, absence of work with the demands of participants before or during a seminar, the discrepancy of participants and trainer's expectations from the offered concept (program) of the seminar is one of the basic reasons for a growing dissatisfaction with results of educational events, both by participants, and trainers. The article examines the following aspects: how, when, and with the help of which means it is possible to coordinate educational demands of the potential participants with the program of a seminar, offered by the trainer. The author gives examples from practice which demonstrate the way preliminary work can be organized to eliminate mentioned difficulties.

Tatiana Krasnova. How can a trainer raise his own competence by "improvised means"?

See this issue, pages 26–29.

Irina Semko. "Debate" technology in context of civil education

Free and open discussion of urgent problems is necessary for development of a civil society. Competent and constructive discussion of urgent problems, understanding essence of public dispute, standard of conducting discussion, proving one's own position and hearing opinion of the opponent should become obligatory qualities of each educated man. The educational technology "Debate" develops these competences. The article described history of occurrence and development of debate, and also the various formats of this technology and examples of their application.

Olga Sviderskaya, Vitaly Nikanovich. A long-term educational course "School of the young leader"

The authors share the experience of realization of the long-term program "School of the leader" by public organization "Christian community of adult and young". The program is directed to the members of this organization with the purpose to stir up internal resources of the participants, develop skills of group interaction, become aware of democratic leadership values, and train an effective management in public organization. The article describes the technology and grade levels in the course "School of the young leader", system of monitoring and estimation of the course efficiency. Responses of some participants are resulted.

EDUCATOR
##1–6, 2004–2005

Summary

#2(5), 2005

You have no position — you have nothing.

See this issue, pages 20–22.

Yanina Zinchenko. Council of Europe and Youth work

There are a lot of different structures that work with young people in the European level. Belarus does not have definite status in Council of Europe but it is one of 48 countries that signed European Cultural Convention. It means that belarusian young people also can participate in programs and events of Council of Europe. The author describes the structure, main principles and approaches in youth work in Europe, special programs for post-soviet and east european countries and also gives her personal oppinion on youth work made by Concil of Europe.

Aliona Lugovtsova, Marina Baranovskaya.
Youth center as a form of work: domestic and foreign experience

Though young people have a wide range of media tools to satisfy their needs in communication nowadays it is a problem – to organize their free time. Youth center is the form of youth work which helps to solve this problem. Youth center gives young people great opportunity to communicate with their mates spending some time together, helps develop their interests and faculties. Article gives a comparative analysis of domestic and foreign approaches to the work of youth centers. Structures, forms and content of work are illustrated on examples of Belarusian, German and Swedish centers. Authors introduce a model of youth center which integrates the best parts of foreign and domestic experience.

Sergej Laboda. Open Space Technology or Miracles of coffee break in open space

Those who participated in trainings or seminars knows that very often the most important and significant results and effects of the whole training take place during coffee breaks – appearing of the most lively and substantial discussions, new ideas, possible projects, contacts exchange, etc. This phenomenon is represented in the base of Open Space Technology. Open Space Technology is a good mean to organize conferenses, symposiums, seminars and other educational events. The author give answers to the following questions: How does this technology works with big groups? What are the main principles, rules and "laws" of Open Space? What are the main advantages of Open Space? How is it possible to organize events using this technology?

Irina Khekhuh. Education through real life

In this article the author summarizes results of theoretical research which she carried out during four-month study in USA in the frame of the "Modern researches" program. This study aimed to investigate the main principles, methods and ways of involving young people into solving problems of local community through developing volunteer initiatives. In the article the author describes theoretical base and practical work experience in realization "education throuth service" approach with students from Gomel State Medical College. She offers several programs as an example and gives some tips how to start volunteer work in educational institution.

Ruslan Djamalov. Summer is a small life

However long you work in a summer camp it seems like everything you do is not enough and it is by different reasons. The author shares his wide experience in summer camps as youth worker introducing variety of exercises, games and songs. Article will help youth leaders to fill the gaps in schedule and diversify free time.

Irina Zvereva. Elaboration and introduction of life skills educational programs: international and domestic approaches

Global changes in economy, politics and social life which took place in 90s around the world provoked lots of different problems in teenagers and youth surroundings – difficulties in proper adaptation to social changes and lack of fit, independent decision making. This situation evoked wide international interest in elaboration and introduction educational programs on developing life skills of youth in schools and other educational institutions. The author analyses different programs that were worked out in the United States, Europe and the Ukraine and describes in details the last integrative course "The culture of life self-determination" that was created by "Christian Children Fondation" and supported by UNICEF in the Ukraine.

Uladzimir Rouda. Study circles as new approach to civic education in Belarus

In this article the author raises the question about the role of civic education in democratization of the society and also analyses the peculiarities of civil education in Belarus. In his oppinion one of the most suitable form of civic education for developing democracy is study circle. He describes the experience of pilot study circles holding by organizations of civic education in Belarus and tells about the creation of Study Circles Resaurse program aimed at support of existing study circles and spreading ideas of study circles in NGO sphere and among not-engaged population in Belarus.

Summary

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Intercultural education: understanding not only with the mind but also with hands and heart.
Interview with Eveline Steinger

Is there any difference between intercultural and multicultural education? What is the role of intercultural education during the last ten years? What is the most important thing in international and intercultural projects? What are the criteria of effectiveness of the programs in the sphere of intercultural education? These questions are answered by a guest from Switzerland Eveline Steinger who has been working for many years in different spheres of intercultural education and has got a big experience in holding educational programs in different countries including Russia and Belarus.

International cooperation — the source of new ideas, upgrading qualification, widening outlook…
Interviewing the leaders of Belarusian NGOs

The leaders of Belarusian NGOs with big experience in international partnership and cooperation discuss its different aspects.

Sergej Laboda, Daria Azarko. Intercultural education and international partnership in the activity of NGOs

See this issue, pages 30–36.

Natalia Riabova. Integration of handicapped people as the form of intercultural education

The author describes the experience of Belarusian youth NGO "Different–Equal" in organizing and holding educational programs aimed at integration of handicapped people. The principle "50 x 50" has become the main one in all projects of the organization. Half of organisation members as well the participants of their events are handicapped people. This principle is carried out through all implemented projects. Such approach is more effective in comparison to other ones where stereotypes are broken in homogeneous groups.

Viacheslav Cherniavsky. Introducing innovations and the role of organizations in the third sector

After participation in organizational-activity game which was held in Kiev, the author saw new opportunities for his NGO — using the system-thinking-activity approach and organizational-activity games. In his opinion this is a good way to project and implement necessary social innovations and then monitor them being introduced in the real life.

Tamara Matskevich. Intercultural education and Belarusian specific character

The author tries to answer the question: "What can be the aim of intercultural education in Belarus?" The author is attracting the attention to the fact that before starting intercultural education it is necessary to single out its social demands and needs in intercultural education, analyze the existing experience and complete it in a careful thoughtful way without destroying.

Andrej Levko. Informational technologies protect childhood

The author thinks that the informational and educational potential of the Internet is not investigated to the end especially its possibilities for developing social competence among socially not protected citizens — children with psycho-physical deviations, orphans etc. This article presents the experience of NGO "Focus group" in introducing Internet technologies in the work of boarding schools.

Janna Skakun. Seminar "Harmony in the diversity"

Game as a cultural phenomena as well as technique though being thoroughly investigated still remains within the sphere of interest. The author shares her experience of holding a big role play "Bureau" at the seminar "Harmony in the diversity" devoted to the worldwide day of refugees. The participants were teenagers aged 14–17 from Afganistan, Georgia and Belarus. The seminar was aimed at developing the understanding the importance of interaction between various cultures and nationalities, problems of refugees.

Tatiana Poshevalova. Paulo Frayre and Folk education in Brazil

The article tells us about a great Brazilian educator of 20th century Paulo Frayre who played an important role in building non-formal education in Latin-American continent. Educacion popular in Spanish means more than popular education in English or education populaire in French. This term includes the element of emancipation and self-determination of oppressed and exploitable people, admitting that people excluded from material wealth, education and taking decisions can together introspect their situation and realize that it is not sanctioned from above and that they should get together to change the structure of the society.

Aliona Lugovtcova. World culture forum "Barselona–2004": PS

The author shares her impressions from participating in the Third World Youth Festival which was held 8–14 August, 2004 in Barselona. The main idea of the forum is the dialogue at world level, conversation, not confrontation. The main three topics of the forum were: cultural diversity, sustainable development and peace making.

Galina Veremeichik. A week of non-formal education…

A week of non-formal education and enlightenment as a form of presenting the interests and popularization of non-formal education is becoming more popular event in contemporary Europe. Apart from some differences festivals and weeks of education have a lot in common. That is why in this article the author is trying to present the main ideas and aims of holding a Week or a Festival of non-formal education as a special event and also to speak about its peculiarities in Belarus.